SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1800,

ON A

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS TO THE THRONE,

Approving of the Answers returned to the Communications from France

RELATIVE TO A

NEGOCIATION FOR PEACE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY.

1800.

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OF THE

Right Honourable William Pitt,

&c. &c.

SIR,

I AM induced, at this period of the debate, to offer my ſentiments to the Houſe, both from an apprehenſion that, at a later hour, the attention of the Houſe muſt neceſſarily be exhauſted, and becauſe the ſentiment with which the Honourable and Learned Gentleman * began his Speech, and with which he has thought proper to conclude it, places the Queſtion preciſely on that ground on which I am moſt deſirous of diſcuſſing it. The learned Gentleman ſeems to aſſume, as the foundation of his reaſoning, and as the great argument for immediate treaty, that every effort to overturn the ſyſtem of the

* Mr. Erſkine.

French Revolution muſt be unavailing, and that it would be not only imprudent, but almoſt impious to ſtruggle longer againſt that order of things, which, on I know not what principle of predeſtination, he appears to conſider as immortal. Little as I am inclined to accede to this opinion, I am not ſorry that the Honourable Gentleman has contemplated the ſubject in this ſerious view. I do indeed conſider the French Revolution as the ſevereſt trial which the viſitation of Providence has ever yet inflicted upon the nations of the earth; but I cannot help reflecting, with ſatisfaction, that this Country, even under ſuch a trial, has not only been exempted from thoſe calamities which have covered almoſt every other part of Europe, but appears to have been reſerved as a refuge and aſylum to thoſe who fled from its perſecution, as a barrier to oppoſe its progreſs, and perhaps ultimately as an inſtrument to deliver the world from the crimes and miſeries which have attended it.

Under this impreſſion, I truſt, the Houſe will forgive me, if I endeavour, as far as I am able, to take a large and comprehenſive view of this important

important queſtion. In doing ſo, I agree with my Honourable Friend, that it would, in any caſe, be impoſſible to ſeparate the preſent diſcuſſion from the former crimes and atrocities of the French Revolution; becauſe both the papers now on the table, and the whole of the Learned Gentleman's argument, force upon our conſideration, the origin of the war, and all the material facts which have occurred during its continuance. The Learned Gentleman has revived and retailed all thoſe arguments from his own pamphlet, which had before paſſed through thirty-ſeven or thirty-eight Editions in print, and now gives them to the Houſe, embelliſhed by the graces of his perſonal delivery. The Firſt Conſul has alſo thought fit to revive and retail the chief arguments uſed by all the Oppoſition Speakers, and all the Oppoſition Publiſhers, in this Country during the laſt ſeven years. And (what is ſtill more material) the queſtion itſelf, which is now immediately at iſſue—the queſtion, whether, under the preſent circumſtances, there is ſuch a proſpect of ſecurity from any Treaty with France, as ought to induce us to negociate, cannot be properly decided upon, without retracing, both

from our own experience, and from that of other Nations, the Nature, the Cauſes, and the Magnitude of the Danger, againſt which we have to guard, in order to judge of the ſecurity which we ought to accept.

I ſay then, that before any man can concur in opinion with that Learned Gentleman; before any man can think that the ſubſtance of his Majeſty's Anſwer is any other than the ſafety of the Country required; before any man can be of opinion, that to the overtures made by the enemy, at ſuch a time, and under ſuch circumſtances, it would have been ſafe to have returned an anſwer concurring in the negociation—he muſt come within one of the three following deſcriptions: He muſt either believe, that the French Revolution neither does now exhibit, nor has at any time exhibited ſuch circumſtances of danger, ariſing out of the very nature of the ſyſtem and the internal ſtate and condition of France, as to leave to foreign powers no adequate ground of ſecurity in negociation; or, ſecondly, he muſt be of opinion, that the change which has recently

taken place, has given that ſecurity, which, in the former ſtages of the Revolution, was wanting; or, thirdly, he muſt be one who, believing that the danger exiſted, not undervaluing its extent, nor miſtaking its nature, nevertheleſs thinks, from his view of the preſent preſſure on the Country, from his view of its ſituation and its proſpects, compared with the ſituation and proſpects of its enemies, that we are, with our eyes open, bound to accept of inadequate ſecurity for every thing that is valuable and ſacred, rather than endure the preſſure, or incur the riſk which would reſult from a farther prolongation of the conteſt.

In diſcuſſing the laſt of theſe Queſtions, we ſhall be led to conſider, what inference is to be drawn from the circumſtances and the reſult of our own negociations in former periods of the war;—whether, in the comparative State of this Country and France, we now ſee the ſame reaſon for repeating our then unſucceſsful experiments;—or whether we have not thence derived the leſſons of

experience

experience, added to the deductions of reaſon, marking the inefficacy and danger of the very meaſures which are quoted to us as precedents for our adoption.

Unwilling, Sir, as I am, to go into much detail on ground which has been ſo often trodden before; yet, when I find the Learned Gentleman, after all the information which he muſt have received; if he has read any of the Anſwers to his Work, (however ignorant he might be when he wrote it) ſtill giving the ſanction of his authority to the ſuppoſition, that the order to M. Chauvelin to depart from this kingdom was the cauſe of the War between this Country and France, I do feel it neceſſary to ſay a few words on that part of the ſubject.

Inaccuracy in dates ſeems to be a ſort of fatality common to all who have written on that ſide of the Queſtion; for even the writer of the Note to His Majeſty is not more correct, in this reſpect, than if he had taken his information only from the pamphlet of the Learned Gentleman.

tleman. The Houſe will recollect the firſt profeſſions of the French Republic, which are enumerated; and enumerated truly, in that note, —they are teſts of every thing which would beſt recommend a Government to the eſteem and confidence of Foreign Powers, and the reverſe of every thing which has been the ſyſtem and practice of France now for near ten years. It is there ſtated, that their firſt principles were love of peace, averſion to conqueſt, and reſpect for the independence of other Countries. In the ſame note, it ſeems indeed admitted that they ſince have violated all thoſe principles, but it is alledged that they have done ſo, only in conſequence of the provocation of other powers. One of the firſt of thoſe provocations is ſtated to have conſiſted in the various outrages offered to their miniſters, of which the example is ſaid to have been ſet by the King of Great Britain in his conduct to M. Chauvelin. In anſwer to this ſuppoſition, it is only neceſſary to remark, that before the example was given, before Auſtria and Pruſſia are ſuppoſed to have been thus encouraged to combine in a plan for the partition of France;

that

that plan, if it ever exiſted at all, had exiſted and been acted upon for above eight months: France and Pruſſia had been at war eight months before the diſmiſſal of M. Chauvelin. So much for the accuracy of the ſtatement.

[*Mr. Erſkine here obſerved that this was not the ſtatement of his argument.*]

I have been hitherto commenting on the arguments contained in the Notes, I come now to thoſe of the Learned Gentleman. I underſtand him to ſay, that the diſmiſſal of M. Chauvelin was the real cauſe, I do not ſay of the general war, but of the rupture between France and England; and the Learned Gentleman ſtates, particularly, that this diſmiſſal rendered all diſcuſſion of the points in diſpute impoſſible. Now I deſire to meet diſtinctly every part of this aſſertion: I maintain on the contrary, that an opportunity was given for diſcuſſing every matter in diſpute between France and Great Britain, as fully as if a regular and accredited French Miniſter had been

been reſident here;—that the cauſes of war, which exiſted at the beginning, or aroſe during the courſe of this diſcuſſion, were ſuch as would have juſtified, twenty times over, a declaration of war on the part of this Country;—that all the explanations on the part of France, were evidently unſatisfactory and inadmiſſible, and that M. Chauvelin had given in a peremptory ultimatum, declaring, that if theſe explanations were not received as ſufficient, and if we did not immediately diſarm, our refuſal would be conſidered as a declaration of war.

After this followed that ſcene which no man can even now ſpeak of without horror, or think of without indignation; that murder and regicide from which I was ſorry to hear the Learned Gentleman date the beginning of the legal Government of France.

Having thus given in their ultimatum, they added, as a farther demand (while we were ſmarting under accumulated injuries, for which all ſatisfaction was denied) that we ſhould in-

ſtantly receive M. Chauvelin as their Ambaſſador, with new credentials, repreſenting them in the character which they had juſt derived from the murder of their ſovereign. We replied, " he came here as the repreſentative of a ſovereign whom you have put to a cruel and illegal death, we have no ſatisfaction for the injuries we have received, no ſecurity from the danger with which we are threatened. Under theſe circumſtances we will not receive your new credentials; the former credentials you have yourſelves recalled by the ſacrifice of your king."

What, from that moment, was the ſituation of M. Chauvelin? He was reduced to the ſituation of a private individual, and was required to quit the kingdom, under the proviſions of the Alien-Act, which, for the purpoſe of ſecuring domeſtic tranquillity, had recently inveſted his Majeſty with the power of removing out of this kingdom, all foreigners ſuſpected of revolutionary principles. Is it contended that he was, then, leſs liable to the proviſions of that act than any other individual foreigner, whoſe conduct afforded

afforded to government juſt ground of objection or ſuſpicion? Did his conduct and connections here afford no ſuch ground? or will it be pretended that the bare act of refuſing to receive freſh credentials from an infant republic, not then acknowledged by any one power of Europe, and in the very act of heaping upon us injuries and inſults, was of itſelf a cauſe of war? So far from it, that even the very nations of Europe, whoſe wiſdom and moderation have been repeatedly extolled for maintaining neutrality, and preſerving friendſhip, with the French republic, remained for years ſubſequent to this period, without receiving from it any accredited miniſter, or doing any one act to acknowledge its political exiſtence.

In anſwer to a repreſentation from the belligerent powers, in December, 1793, Count Bernſtorff, the miniſter of Denmark, officially declared, that, " It was well known, that the " National Convention had appointed M. Grou- " ville Miniſter-Plenipotentiary at Denmark, but " that it was alſo well known, that he had nei- " ther been received nor acknowledged in that

 " quality.

" quality.*" And as late as February, 1796, when the ſame miniſter was at length, for the firſt time, received in his official capacity, Count Bernſtorff, in a public Note, aſſigned this reaſon for that change of conduct, " So long as no " other than a revolutionary government exiſted " in France, his Majeſty could not acknowledge " the miniſter of that government; but now that " the French conſtitution is completely orga- " nized, and a regular government eſtabliſhed in " France, his Majeſty's obligation ceaſes in that " reſpect, and M. Grouville will therefore be " acknowledged in the uſual form."† How far the Court of Denmark was juſtified in the opinion, that a revolutionary government then no longer exiſted in France, it is not now neceſſary to inquire; but whatever may have been the fact, in that reſpect, the principle on which they acted is clear and intelligible, and is a deciſive inſtance in favour of the propoſition which I have maintained.

* State Papers publiſhed for Debrett, vol. 1. p. 338.

† *Ibid.* vol. 4. p. 306.

Is it then neceſſary to examine what were the terms of that ultimatum, with which we refuſed to comply? Acts of hoſtility had been openly threatened againſt our Allies; an hoſtility founded upon the aſſumption of a right which would at once ſuperſede the whole law of nations; the pretended right to open the Scheldt we diſcuſſed, at the time, not ſo much on account of its immediate importance, (though it was important both in a maritime and commercial view) as on account of the general principle on which it was founded. On the ſame arbitrary notion they ſoon afterwards diſcovered that ſacred law of nature, which made the Rhine and the Alps the legitimate boundaries of France, and aſſumed the power which they have affected to exerciſe through the whole of the revolution, of ſuperſeding, by a new code of their own, all the recognized principles of the law of nations. They were, in fact, actually advancing towards the republic of Holland, by rapid ſtrides, after the victory of Jamappe, and they had ordered their generals to purſue the Auſtrian troops into any neutral country:

country: thereby explicitly avowing an intention of invading Holland. They had already ſhewn their moderation and ſelf-denial, by incorporating Belgium with the French Republic. Theſe lovers of peace, who ſet out with a ſworn averſion to conqueſt, and profeſſions of reſpect for the independence of other nations; who pretend that they departed from this ſyſtem, only in conſequence of your aggreſſion, themſelves in time of peace, while you were ſtill confeſſedly neutral, without the pretence or ſhadow of provocation, wreſted Savoy from the King of Sardinia, and had proceeded to incorporate it likewiſe with France. Theſe were their aggreſſions at this period; and more than theſe. They had iſſued an univerſal Declaration of War againſt all the Thrones of Europe; and they had, by their conduct, applied it particularly and ſpecifically to you: they had paſſed the Decree of the 19th of November, proclaiming the promiſe of French ſuccour to all nations who ſhould manifeſt a wiſh to become free: they had, by all their language, as well as their example, ſhewn what they underſtood to be freedom: they had ſealed their principles by the depo-

depoſition of their ſovereign: they had applied them to England, by inviting and encouraging the addreſſes of thoſe ſeditious and traitorous ſocieties, who, from the beginning, favoured their views, and who, encouraged by your forbearance, were even then publicly avowing French doctrines, and anticipating their ſucceſs in this country: who were hailing the progreſs of thoſe proceedings in France, which led to the murder of its king: they were even then looking to the day when they ſhould behold a National Convention in England, formed upon ſimilar principles.

And what were the explanations they offered on theſe different grounds of offence? As to Holland; they told you, the Scheldt was too inſignificant for you to trouble yourſelves about, and therefore it was to be decided as they choſe, in breach of poſitive treaty, which they had themſelves guaranteed, and which we, by our alliance, were bound to ſupport. If, however, after the war was over, Belgium ſhould have conſolidated its liberty, (a term of which we

now know the meaning, from the fate of every nation into which the arms of France have penetrated) then Belgium and Holland might, if they pleaſed, ſettle the queſtion of the Scheldt, by ſeparate negociation between themſelves. With reſpect to aggrandizement, they aſſured us, that they would retain poſſeſſion of Belgium by arms, no longer than they ſhould find it neceſſary to the purpoſe already ſtated, of conſolidating its liberty. And with reſpect to the decree of the 19th of November, applied as it was pointedly to you, by all the intercourſe I have ſtated with all the ſeditious and traitorous part of this Country, and particularly by the ſpeeches of every leading man among them, they contented themſelves with aſſerting, that the declaration conveyed no ſuch meaning as was imputed to it, and that, ſo far from encouraging ſedition, it could apply only to countries where a great majority of the people ſhould have already declared itſelf in favour of a revolution; a ſuppoſition which, as they aſſerted, neceſſarily implied a total abſence of all ſedition.

What

What would have been the effect of admitting this explanation?—to ſuffer a nation, and an armed nation, to preach to the inhabitants of all the countries in the world, that they themſelves were ſlaves, and their rulers tyrants: to encourage and invite them to revolution, by a previous promiſe of French ſupport, to whatever might call itſelf a majority, or to whatever France might declare to be ſo. This was the their explanation: and this, they told you, was their ultimatum.

But was this all? Even at that very moment, when they were endeavouring to induce you to admit theſe explanations, to be contented with the avowal, that France offered herſelf as a general guarantee for every ſucceſsful revolution, and would interfere only to ſanction and confirm whatever the free and uninfluenced choice of the people might have decided, what were their orders to their generals on the ſame ſubject? in the midſt of theſe amicable explanations with you, came forth a decree which I really believe muſt be effaced from the minds of Gentlemen oppoſite to me, if they can prevail upon themſelves

for a moment to hint even a doubt upon the origin of this quarrel, not only as to this Country, but as to all the Nations of Europe with whom France has been ſubſequently engaged in hoſtility. I ſpeak of the Decree of the 15th of December. This decree, more even than all the previous tranſactions, amounted to an univerſal declaration of war againſt all Thrones, and againſt all Civilized Governments. It ſaid, wherever the armies of France ſhall come, (whether within countries then at war or at peace is not diſtinguiſhed) in all thoſe countries it ſhall be the firſt care of their generals to introduce the principles and the practice of the French Revolution; to demoliſh all privileged orders, and every thing which obſtructs the eſtabliſhment of their New Syſtem.

If any doubt is entertained, whither the armies of France were intended to come; if it is contended that they referred only to thoſe nations with whom they were then at war, or with whom, in the courſe of this conteſt, they might be driven into war; let it be remembered, that at this very moment, they had actually given orders to their

Generals to purſue the Auſtrian army from the Netherlands into Holland, with whom they were at that time in peace. Or, even if the conſtruction contended for is admitted, let us ſee what would have been its application, let us look at the liſt of their aggreſſions, which was read by my Right Honorable Friend* near me. With whom they have been at war ſince the period of this declaration? With all the nations of Europe ſave two,† and if not with thoſe two, it is only becauſe, with every provocation that could juſtify defenſive war, thoſe Countries have hitherto acquieſced in repeated violations of their rights, rather than recur to war for their vindication. Wherever their arms have been carried it will be a matter of ſhort ſubſequent inquiry to trace whether they have faithfully applied theſe principles. If in terms, this Decree is a denunciation of war againſt all Governments; if in practice it has been applied againſt every one with which France has come into contact; what is it but the deliberate code of the French

* Mr. Dundas. † Sweden and Denmark.

Revolution, from the birth of the republic, which has never once been departed from, which has been enforced with unremitted rigour againſt all the nations that have come into their power?

If there could otherwiſe be any doubt whether the application of this decree was intended to be univerſal, whether it applied to all nations, and to England particularly? There is one circumſtance, which alone, would be deciſive—that nearly at the ſame period it was propoſed, in the National Convention,* to declare expreſsly, that the decree of the Nineteenth of November was confined to the nations with whom they were then at war; and that propoſal was rejected by a great majority; by that very Convention from whom we were deſired to receive theſe explanations as ſatisfactory.

Such, Sir, was the nature of the ſyſtem. Let us examine a little farther, whether it was from the beginning intended to be acted upon, in the

* On a Motion of M. Baraillon.

extent

extent which I have ſtated. At the very moment when their threats appeared to many, little elſe than the ravings of madmen, they were digeſting and methodizing the means of execution, as accurately as if they had actually forſeen the extent to which they have ſince been able to realize their criminal projects; they ſat down coolly to deviſe the moſt regular and effectual mode of making the application of this ſyſtem the current buſineſs of the day, and incorporating it with the general orders of their army; for (will the Houſe believe it,) this confirmation of the decree of the Nineteenth of November was accompanied by an expoſition and commentary addreſſed to the General of every army of France, containing a ſchedule as coolly conceived, and as methodically reduced, as any by which the moſt quiet buſineſs of a Juſtice of Peace, or the móſt regular Routine of any department of State in this country could be conducted. Each Commander was furniſhed with one general blank formula of a letter for all the nations of the world! The People of France to the People of Greeting, "We are come to expel your tyrants." Even this

this was not all; one of the articles of the decree of the Fifteenth of December, was expreſsly, "*that thoſe who ſhould ſhew themſelves ſo brutiſh and ſo enamoured of their chains as to refuſe the reſtoration of their rights, to renounce liberty and equality, or to preſerve, recall, or treat with their Prince or privileged orders, were not entitled to the diſtinction which France, in other caſes, had juſtly eſtabliſhed between Government and People; and that ſuch a people ought to be treated according to the rigour of war, and of conqueſt.*" * Here is their love of peace; here is their averſion to conqueſt; here is their reſpect for the independance of other nations!

It was then, after receiving ſuch explanations as theſe, after receiving the ultimatum of France, and after M. Chauvelin's credentials had ceaſed, that he was required to depart. Even after that period, I am almoſt aſhamed to record it, we did not on our part ſhut the door againſt other attempts to negociate, but this tranſaction was immediately

* Vide Decree of 15th December, 1792.

followed

followed by the declaration of war, proceeding not from England in vindication of its rights, but from France as the completion of the injuries and insults they had offered. And on a war thus originating, can it be doubted, by an English House of Commons, whether the aggression was on the part of this country or of France? or whether the manifest aggression on the part of France was the result of any thing but the principles which characterize the French Revolution?

What then are the resources and subterfuges by which those, who agree with the Learned Gentleman, are prevented from sinking under the force of this simple statement of facts? None but what are found in the insinuation contained in the note from France, that this country had, previous to the transactions to which I have referred, encouraged and supported the combination of other powers directed against them.

Upon this part of the subject, the proofs which contradict such an insinuation, are innumerable. In the first place, the evidence of dates: in the second

ſecond place, the admiſſion of all the different parties in France; of the friends of Briſſot charging on Robeſpierre the war with this country, and of the friends of Robeſpierre charging it on Briſſot; but both acquitting England; the teſtimonies of the French Government during the whole interval, ſince the declaration of Pilnitz, and the pretended treaty of *Pavia*; the firſt of which had not the ſlighteſt relation to any project or partition of diſmemberment; the ſecond of which I firmly believe to be an abſolute fabrication and forgery, and in neither of which, even as they are repreſented, any reaſon has been aſſigned for believing that this country had any ſhare. Even M. Talleyrand himſelf was ſent by the Conſtitutional King of the French, after the period when that concert, which is now charged, muſt have exiſted, if it exiſted at all, with a letter from the King of France, expreſsly thanking his Majeſty for the neutrality which he had uniformly obſerved. The ſame fact is confirmed by the concurring evidence of every perſon who knew any thing of the plans of the king of Sweden in 1791; the only ſovereign who, I believe, at that

that time meditated any hoſtile meaſures againſt France, and whoſe utmoſt hopes were expreſsly ſtated to be, that England would not oppoſe his intended expedition; by all thoſe, alſo, who knew any thing of the conduct of the Emperor or the King of Pruſſia; by the clear and deciſive teſtimony of M. Chauvelin himſelf in his diſpatches from hence to the French Government, ſince publiſhed by their authority; by every thing which has occurred ſince the war; by the publications of Dumourier; by the publications of Briſſot; by the facts that have ſince come to light in America, with reſpect to the miſſion of M. Genet; which ſhew that hoſtility againſt this country was decided on the part of France long before the period when M. Chauvelin was ſent from hence; beſides this, the reduction of our peace eſtabliſhment in the year 1791, and continued to the ſubſequent year, is a fact from which the inference is indiſputable: a fact, which I am afraid, ſhews not only that we were not waiting for the occaſion of war, but that in our partiality for a pacific ſyſtem, we had indulged ourſelves in a fond and credulous ſecurity, which wiſdom,

and diſcretion would not have dictated. In addition to every other proof it is ſingular enough, that in a Decree, on the eve of the Declaration of War on the part of France, it is expreſsly ſtated, as for the firſt time, that England was then departing from that ſyſtem of Neutrality *which ſhe had hitherto obſerved.*

But, Sir, I will not reſt merely on theſe teſtimonies or arguments, however ſtrong and deciſive. I aſſert diſtinctly and poſitively, and I have the documents in my hand to prove it, that from the middle of the year 1791, upon the firſt rumour of any meaſure taken by the Emperor of Germany, and till late in the year 1792, we not only were no parties to any of the projects imputed to the Emperor, but, from the political circumſtances in which we then ſtood with relation to that Court, we wholly declined all communications with him on the ſubject of France. To Pruſſia, with whom we were in connection, and ſtill more deciſively to Holland, with whom we were in cloſe and intimate correſpondence, we uniformly ſtated our unalterable

reſolu-

reſolution to maintain neutrality, and avoid interference in the internal affairs of France, as long as France ſhould refrain from hoſtile meaſures againſt us and our Allies. No Miniſter of England had any authority to treat with Foreign States, even proviſionally, for any warlike concert, till after the battle of Jemappe; till a period ſubſequent to the repeated provocations which had been offered to us, and ſubſequent particularly to the Decree of Fraternity of the 19th of November; even then, to what object was it that the concert which we wiſhed to eſtabliſh, was to be directed? If we had then rightly caſt the true character of the French Revolution, I cannot now deny that we ſhould have been better juſtified in a very different conduct. But it is material to the preſent argument to declare what that conduct actually was, becauſe it is of itſelf ſufficient to confute all the pretexts by which the advocates of France have ſo long laboured to perplex the queſtion of Aggreſſion.

At that period, Ruſſia had at length conceived, as well as ourſelves, a natural and

juſt alarm for the Balance of Europe, and applied to us to learn our ſentiments on the ſubject. In our anſwer to this application we imparted to Ruſſia the principles upon which we then acted, and we communicated this anſwer to Pruſſia, with whom we were connected in defenſive alliance. I will ſtate ſhortly the leading part of thoſe principles. A diſpatch was ſent from Lord Grenville to his Majeſty's Miniſter in Ruſſia, dated the 29th of December, 1792, ſtating a deſire to have an explanation ſet on foot on the ſubject of the War with France. I will read the material parts of it.

" The two leading points on which ſuch ex-
" planation will naturally turn, are the line of
" conduct to be followed previous to the com-
" mencement of hoſtilities, and with a view, if
" poſſible, to avert them; and the nature and
" amount of the forces which the powers en-
" gaged in this concert might be enabled to
" uſe, ſuppoſing ſuch extremities unavoidable.

" With

" With reſpect to the firſt, it appears on the
" whole, ſubject however to future conſideration
" and diſcuſſion with the other Powers, that the
" moſt adviſeable ſtep to be taken would be, that
" ſufficient explanation ſhould be had with the
" Powers at War with France, in order to en-
" able thoſe not hitherto engaged in the War to
" propoſe to that Country terms of Peace. That
" theſe terms ſhould be, the withdrawing their
" arms within the limits of the French territory;
" the abandoning their conqueſts; the reſcinding
" any acts injurious to the Sovereignty or Rights
" of any other Nations, and the giving in ſome
" public and unequivocal manner a pledge of
" their intention no longer to foment troubles,
" or to excite diſturbances againſt other Go-
" vernments. In return for theſe ſtipulations,
" the different Powers of Europe, who ſhould
" be parties to this meaſure, might engage to
" abandon all meaſures, or views of hoſtility
" againſt France, or interference in their internal
" affairs, and to maintain a correſpondence and
" intercourſe of Amity with the exiſting Powers
" in that Country, with whom ſuch a Treaty

" may

" may be concluded. If, on the reſult of this " propoſal ſo made by the Powers acting in " concert, theſe terms ſhould not be accepted " by France, or being accepted, ſhould not be " ſatisfactorily performed, the different Powers " might then engage themſelves to each other " to enter into active meaſures, for the purpoſe " of obtaining the ends in view; and it may be " to be conſidered, whether, in ſuch caſe, they " might not reaſonably look to ſome indemnity " for the expences and hazards to which they " would neceſſarily be expoſed."

The diſpatch then proceeded to the ſecond point, that of the Forces to be employed, on which it is unneceſſary now to ſpeak.

Now, Sir, I would really aſk any perſon who has been, from the beginning, the moſt deſirous of avoiding hoſtilities, whether it is poſſible to conceive any meaſure to be adopted in the ſituation in which we then ſtood, which could more evidently demonſtrate our deſire, after repeated provocations, to preſerve Peace, on any terms

conſiſtent

conſiſtent with our ſafety; or whether any ſentiment could now be ſuggeſted which would have more plainly marked our moderation, forbearance, and ſincerity? In ſaying this I am not challenging the applauſe and approbation of my Country, becauſe I muſt now confeſs that we were too ſlow in anticipating that danger of which we had, perhaps, even then ſufficient experience, though far ſhort, indeed, of that which we now poſſeſs, and that we might even then have ſeen, what facts have ſince but too inconteſtably proved, that nothing but vigorous and open hoſtility can afford complete and adequate ſecurity againſt Revolutionary principles, while they retain a proportion of power ſufficient to furniſh the means of War.

I will enlarge no farther on the Origin of the War. I have read and detailed to you a ſyſtem which was in itſelf a declaration of War againſt all Nations, which was ſo intended, and which has been ſo applied, which has been exemplified in the extreme peril and hazard of almoſt all who for a moment have truſted to Treaty, and which

has not at this hour overwhelmed Europe in one indiſcriminate maſs of ruin, only becauſe we have not indulged, to a fatal extremity, that diſpoſition, which we have however indulged too far; becauſe we have not conſented to truſt to profeſſion and compromiſe, rather than to our own valour and exertion, for ſecurity againſt a ſyſtem, from which we never ſhall be delivered till either the principle is extinguiſhed, or till its ſtrength is exhauſted.

I might, Sir, if I found it neceſſary, enter into much detail upon this part of the ſubject; but at preſent I only beg leave to expreſs my readineſs at any time to enter upon it, when either my own ſtrength, or the patience of the Houſe will admit of it; but, I ſay, without diſtinction, againſt every Nation in Europe, and againſt ſome out of Europe, the Principle has been faithfully applied. You cannot look at the Map of Europe, and lay your hand upon that Country againſt which France has not either declared an open and aggreſſive War, or violated ſome poſi-

tive

tive Treaty, or broken ſome recognized principle of the Law of Nations.

This ſubject may be divided into various periods. There were ſome acts of hoſtility committed previous to the war with this country, and very little indeed ſubſequent to that declaration, which abjured the love of conqueſt. The attack upon the Papal State, by the ſeizure of Avignon, in 1791, was accompanied with ſpecimens of all the vile arts and perfidy that ever diſgraced a revolution. Avignon was ſeparated from its lawful ſovereign, with whom not even the pretence of quarrel exiſted, and forcibly incorporated in the tyranny of One and Indiviſible France. The ſame ſyſtem led, in the ſame year, to an aggreſſion againſt the whole German Empire, by the ſeizure of Porentrui, part of the dominions of the Biſhop of Baſle. Afterwards, in 1792, unpreceded by any declaration of war, or any cauſe of hoſtility, and in direct violation of the ſolemn pledge to abſtain from conqueſt, they made war againſt the King of Sardinia, by the ſeizure of Savoy, for the purpoſe

of incorporating it, in like manner, with France. In the ſame year, they had proceeded to the declaration of war againſt Auſtria, againſt Pruſſia, and againſt the German Empire, in which they have been juſtified only on the ground of a rooted hoſtility, combination, and league of ſovereigns, for the diſmemberment of France. I ſay, that ſome of the documents, brought to ſupport this pretence, are ſpurious and falſe; I ſay, that even in thoſe that are not ſo, there is not one word to prove the charge principally relied upon, that of an intention to effect the diſmemberment of France, or to impoſe upon it, by force, any particular conſtitution. I ſay, that as far as we have been able to trace what paſſed at Pilnitz, the declaration there ſigned referred to the impriſonment of Louis XVI. its immediate view was to effect his deliverance, if a concert ſufficiently extenſive could be formed with other ſovereigns, for that purpoſe. It left the internal ſtate of France to be decided by the king reſtored to his liberty, with the free conſent of the ſtates of his kingdom, and it did not contain

one

one word relative to the diſmemberment of France.

In the ſubſequent diſcuſſions, which took place in 1792, and which embraced at the ſame time, all the other points of jealouſy which had ariſen between the two Countries, the declaration of Pilnitz was referred to, and explained on the part of Auſtria in a manner preciſely conformable to what I have now ſtated; and the amicable explanations which took place, both on this ſubject and on all the matters in diſpute, will be found in the official correſpondence between the two Courts which has been made public; and it will be found that as long as the negociation continued to be conducted through M. Deleſſart, then Miniſter for Foreign Affairs, there was a great proſpect that thoſe diſcuſſions would be amicably terminated; but it is notorious, and has ſince been clearly proved on the authority of *Briſſot* himſelf, that the violent party in France conſidered ſuch an iſſue of the negociation as likely to be fatal to their projects, and thought, to uſe his own words, that "war

was neceſſary to conſolidate the revolution." For the expreſs purpoſe of producing the war, they excited a popular tumult in Paris; they inſiſted upon and obtained the diſmiſſal of M. Deleſſart. A new Miniſter was appointed in his room, the tone of the negociation was immediately changed, and an ultimatum was ſent to the Emperor, ſimilar to that which was afterwards ſent to this country, affording him no ſatisfaction on his juſt grounds of complaint, and requiring him, under thoſe circumſtances, to diſarm. The firſt events of the conteſt proved how much more France was prepared for war than Auſtria, and afford a ſtrong confirmation of the propoſition which I maintain; that no offenſive intention was entertained on the part of the latter power.

War was then declared againſt Auſtria; a war which I ſtate to be a war of aggreſſion on the part of France. The King of Pruſſia had declared, that he ſhould conſider war againſt the Emperor or Empire as war againſt himſelf. He had declared, that, as a Co-eſtate of the Empire, he was determined

mined to defend their rights; that, as an Ally of the Emperor, he would ſupport him to the utmoſt againſt any attack; and that, for the ſake of his own dominions, he felt himſelf called upon to reſiſt the progreſs of French principles, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. With this notice before them, France declared war upon the Emperor, and the war with Pruſſia was the neceſſary conſequence of this aggreſſion, both againſt the Emperor and the Empire.

The war againſt the king of Sardinia follows next. The declaration of that war was the ſeizure of Savoy, by an invading army;—and on what ground? On that which has been ſtated already. They had found out, by ſome light of nature, that the Rhine and the Alps were the natural limits of France. Upon that ground Savoy was ſeized; and Savoy was alſo incorporated with France.

Here finiſhes the hiſtory of the wars in which France was engaged, antecedent to the war with Great Britain, with Holland, and with

with Spain. With reſpect to Spain, we have ſeen nothing which leads us to ſuſpect, that either attachment to religion, or the ties of conſanguinity, or regard to the ancient ſyſtem of Europe, was likely to induce that Court to connect itſelf in offenſive war againſt France. The war was evidently and inconteſtably begun by France againſt Spain.

The caſe of Holland is ſo freſh in every man's recollection, and ſo connected with the immediate cauſes of the war with this country, that it cannot require one word of obſervation. What ſhall I ſay then on the caſe of Portugal? I cannot indeed ſay, that France ever declared war againſt that country, I can hardly ſay even that ſhe ever made war, but ſhe required them to make a treaty of peace, as if they had been at war: ſhe obliged them to purchaſe that treaty; ſhe broke it as ſoon as it was purchaſed, and ſhe had originally no other ground of complaint than this,—that Portugal had performed, though inadequately, the engagements of its ancient defenſive alliance with this country, in the character of an auxiliary;

auxiliary; a conduct which cannot of itself make any power a principal in a war.

I have now enumerated all the nations at war at that period, with the exception only of Naples. It can hardly be necessary to call to the recollection of the House, the characteristic feature of revolutionary principles which was shewn, even at this early period, in the personal insult offered to the King of Naples, by the Commander of a French squadron, riding uncontrouled in the Mediterranean, and (while our Fleets were yet unarmed) threatening destruction to all the coast of Italy.

It was not till a considerably later period, that almost all the other Nations of Europe found themselves equally involved in actual hostility: but it is not a little material to the whole of my argument, compared with the statement of the Learned Gentleman, and with that contained in the French note, to examine at what period this hostility extended itself. It extended itself, in the course of 1796, to the States of Italy which had

had hitherto been exempted from it. In 1797 it had ended in the deſtruction of moſt of them; it had ended in the virtual depoſition of the King of Sardinia; it had ended in the converſion of Genoa and Tuſcany into Democratic Republics; it had ended in the revolution of Venice, in the violation of treaties with the new Venitian Republic; and finally, in transferring that very Republic, the creature and vaſſal of France, to the Dominion of Auſtria.

I obſerve from the geſtures of ſome Honourable Gentlemen, that they think we are precluded from the uſe of any argument founded on this laſt tranſaction. I already hear them ſaying, that it was as criminal in Auſtria to receive as it was in France to give. I am far from defending or palliating the conduct of Auſtria upon this occaſion. But becauſe Auſtria, unable at laſt to contend with the arms of France, was forced to accept an unjuſt and inſufficient indemnification for the conqueſts France had made from it, are we to be debarred from ſtating what, on the part of France, was not merely

an unjuſt acquiſition, but an act of the groſſeſt and moſt aggravated perfidy and cruelty, and one of the moſt ſtriking ſpecimens of that ſyſtem which has been uniformly and indiſcriminately applied to all the countries which France has had within its graſp. This only can be ſaid in vindication of France, (and it is ſtill more a vindication of Auſtria) that, practically ſpeaking, if there is any part of this tranſaction for which Venice itſelf has reaſon to be grateful, it can only be for the permiſſion to exchange the embraces of French fraternity for what is called the deſpotiſm of Vienna.

Let theſe facts, and theſe dates, be compared with what we have heard. The Honourable Gentleman has told us, and the Author of the Note from France has told us alſo, that all the French conqueſts were produced by the operations of the Allies. It was, when they were preſſed on all ſides, when their own Territory was in danger, when their own Independence was in queſtion, when the Confederacy appeared too ſtrong; it was then they

uſed the means with which their power and their courage furniſhed them; and, "attacked upon all ſides, they carried every where their defenſive arms."* I do not wiſh to miſrepreſent the Learned Gentleman, but I underſtood him to ſpeak of this ſentiment with approbation: the ſentiment itſelf is this, that if a nation is unjuſtly attacked in any one quarter by others, ſhe cannot ſtop to conſider by whom, but muſt find means of ſtrength in other quarters, no matter where; and is juſtified in attacking, in her turn, thoſe with whom ſhe is at Peace, and from whom ſhe has received no ſpecies of provocation.

Sir, I hope I have already proved, in a great meaſure, that no ſuch attack was made upon France; but, if it was made, I maintain that the whole ground on which that argument is founded cannot be tolerated. In the name of the Laws of Nature and Nations, in the name of every thing that is ſacred and honourable, I

* Vide M. Talleyrand's Note.

demur

demur to that plea, and I tell that Honourable and Learned Gentleman, that he would do well, to look again into the Law of Nations, before he ventures to come to this Houſe, to give the ſanction of his authority to ſo dreadful and execrable a ſyſtem.

[*Mr. Erſkine here ſaid, acroſs the Houſe, that he had never maintained ſuch a propoſition.*]

Mr. Pitt.—I certainly underſtood this to be diſtinctly the tenor of the Learned Gentleman's argument, but as he tells me he did not uſe it, I take it for granted he did not intend to uſe it; I rejoice that he did not; but at leaſt then I have a right to expect, that the Learned Gentleman ſhould now transfer to the French Note ſome of the indignation which he has hitherto laviſhed upon the declarations of this Country. This principle, which the Learned Gentleman diſclaims, the French Note avows; and I contend, without the fear of contradiction, it is the principle upon which France has uniformly

acted. But while the Learned Gentleman diſclaims this propoſition, he certainly will admit, that he has himſelf aſſerted, and maintained in the whole courſe of his argument, that the preſſure of the War upon France, impoſed upon her the neceſſity of thoſe exertions which produced moſt of the Enormities of the Revolution, and moſt of the Enormities practiſed againſt the other countries of Europe. The Houſe will recollect, that, in the year 1796, when all theſe horrors in Italy were beginning, which are the ſtrongeſt illuſtrations of the general character of the French Revolution, we had begun that negociation to which the Learned Gentleman has referred. England then poſſeſſed numerous conqueſts; England, though not having at that time had the advantage of three of her moſt ſplendid victories, England, even then, appeared undiſputed Miſtreſs of the Sea; England, having then ingroſſed the whole wealth of the Colonial World; England, having loſt nothing of its original poſſeſſions; England then comes forward, propoſing general Peace, and offering — what? offering the ſurrender of all that it had acquired, in

order

order to obtain — what? not the diſmemberment, not the partition of ancient France, but the return of a part of thoſe conqueſts, no one of which could be retained, but in direct contradiction to that original and ſolemn pledge which is now referred to, as the proof of the juſt and moderate diſpoſition of the French Republic. Yet, even this offer was not ſufficient to procure Peace, or to arreſt the progreſs of France in her *defenſive operations* againſt other unoffending Countries. From the pages, however, of the Learned Gentleman's Pamphlet (which, after all its Editions, is now freſher in his memory than in that of any other perſon in this Houſe, or in the Country), he is furniſhed with an argument, on the reſult of the negociation, on which he appears confidently to rely. He maintains, that the ſingle point on which the Negociation was broken off, was the queſtion of the poſſeſſion of the Auſtrian Netherlands; and that it is, therefore, on that ground only, that the War has, ſince that time, been continued. When this ſubject was before under diſcuſſion, I ſtated, and I ſhall ſtate again, (notwith-

withſtanding the Learned Gentleman's accuſation of my having endeavoured to ſhift the queſtion from its true point) that the queſtion, then at iſſue, was not, whether the Netherlands ſhould, in fact, be reſtored; though even on that queſtion I am not, like the Learned Gentleman, unprepared to give any opinion, I am ready to ſay, that to leave that territory in the poſſeſſion of France would be obviouſly dangerous to the intereſts of this Country, and is inconſiſtent with the policy which it has uniformly purſued, at every period in which it has concerned itſelf in the general ſyſtem of the Continent; but it was not on the deciſion of this queſtion of expediency and policy, that the iſſue of the Negociation then turned; what was required of us by France was, not merely that we ſhould acquieſce in her retaining the Netherlands, but, that, as a *preliminary* to all treaty, and before entering upon the diſcuſſion of terms, we ſhould recognize the principle, that whatever France, in time of War, had *annexed* to the Republic muſt remain inſeparable for ever, and could not become the ſubject

ject of Negociation. I say, that, in refusing such a preliminary, we were only resisting the claim of France, to arrogate to itself the power of controlling, by its own separate and municipal acts, the rights and interests of other countries, and moulding, at its discretion, a new and general code of the Law of Nations.

In reviewing the issue of this Negociation, it is important to observe, that France, who began by abjuring a love of conquest, was desired to give up nothing of her own, not even to give up all that she had conquered; that it was offered to her to receive back all that had been conquered from her; and when she rejected the negociation for peace upon these grounds, are we then to be told of the unrelenting hostility of the Combined Powers, for which France was to revenge itself upon other countries, and which is to justify the subversion of every established government, and the destruction of property, religion, and domestic comfort, from one end of Italy to the other? Such was the effect of the war against Modena, against Genoa,

against

againſt Tuſcany, againſt Venice, againſt Rome, and againſt Naples, all of which ſhe engaged in, or proſecuted, ſubſequent to this very period.

After this, in the year 1797, Auſtria had made peace, England and its Ally, Portugal, (from whom we could expect little active aſſiſtance, but whom we felt it our duty to defend) alone remained in the war. In that ſituation, under the preſſure of neceſſity, which I ſhall not diſguiſe, we made another attempt to negociate. In 1797, Pruſſia, Spain, Auſtria, Naples, having ſucceſſively made peace, the Princes of Italy having been deſtroyed, France having ſurrounded itſelf, in almoſt every part in which it is not ſurrounded by the ſea, with Revolutionary Republics, England made another offer of a different nature. It was not now a demand that France ſhould reſtore any thing, Auſtria having made a peace upon her own terms, England had nothing to require with regard to her Allies, ſhe aſked no reſtitution of the dominions added to France in Europe. So far from retaining any thing French out of Europe,

we freely offered them all, demanding only, as a poor compenſation, to retain a part of what we had acquired by arms, from Holland, then identified with France. This propoſal alſo, Sir, was proudly refuſed, in a way which the Learned Gentleman himſelf has not attempted to juſtify, indeed of which he has ſpoken with deteſtation. I wiſh, ſince he has not finally abjured his duty in this Houſe, that that deteſtation had been ſtated earlier, that he had mixed his own voice with the general voice of his country on the reſult of that negociation.

Let us look at the conduct of France immediately ſubſequent to this period. She had ſpurned at the offers of Great Britain, ſhe had reduced her continental enemies to the neceſſity of accepting a precarious peace, ſhe had (in ſpite of thoſe pledges repeatedly made and uniformly violated) ſurrounded herſelf by new conqueſts, on every part of her frontier but one; that one was Switzerland. The firſt effect of being relieved from the war with Auſtria, of being ſecured againſt all fears of continental

invaſion on the ancient territory of France, was their unprovoked attack againſt this unoffending and devoted country. This was one of the ſcenes which ſatisfied even thoſe who were the moſt incredulous, that France had thrown off the maſk, "*if indeed ſhe had ever worn it.*" * It collected, in one view, many of the characteriſtic features of that revolutionary ſyſtem which I have endeavoured to trace, the perfidy which alone rendered their arms ſucceſsful, the pretext of which they availed themſelves to produce diviſion and prepare the entrance of Jacobiniſm in that country, the propoſal of armiſtice, one of the known and regular engines of the Revolution, which was, as uſual, the immediate prelude to military execution, attended with cruelty and barbarity, of which there are few examples: all theſe are known to the world. The country they attacked was one which had long been the faithful ally of France, which, inſtead of giving cauſe of jealouſy to any other power, had been, for ages, proverbial for the ſimplicity and

* Vide Speeches at the Whig-Club.

in

innocence of its manners, and which had acquired and preſerved the eſteem of all the nations of Europe; which had almoſt, by the common conſent of mankind, been exempted from the ſound of war, and marked out as a Land of *Goſhen*, ſafe and untouched in the midſt of ſurrounding calamities.

Look then at the fate of Switzerland, at the circumſtances which led to its deſtruction, add this inſtance to the catalogue of aggreſſion againſt all Europe, and then tell me, whether the ſyſtem I have deſcribed has not been proſecuted with an unrelenting ſpirit, which cannot be ſubdued in adverſity, which cannot be appeaſed in proſperity, which neither ſolemn profeſſions, nor the general law of nations, nor the obligation of treaties, (whether previous to the revolution or ſubſequent to it) could reſtrain from the ſubverſion of every ſtate into which, either by force or fraud, their arms could penetrate. Then tell me, whether the diſaſters of Europe are to be charged upon the provocation of this country and its allies, or on the inherent

principle of the French Revolution, of which the natural reſult produced ſo much miſery and carnage in France, and carried deſolation and terror over ſo large a portion of the world.

Sir, much as I have now ſtated I have not finiſhed the catalogue. America almoſt as much as Switzerland, perhaps, contributed to that change which has taken place in the minds of thoſe who were originally partial to the principles of the French Government. The hoſtility againſt America followed a long courſe of neutrality adhered to, under the ſtrongeſt provocations, or rather of repeated compliances to France, with which we might well have been diſſatisfied. It was on the face of it, unjuſt and wanton; and it was accompanied by thoſe inſtances of ſordid corruption which ſhocked and diſguſted even the enthuſiaſtic admirers of revolutionary purity, and threw a new light on the genius of Revolutionary Government.

After this, it remains only ſhortly to remind Gentlemen of the aggreſſion againſt Egypt, not

omitting, however, to notice the capture of Malta, in the way to Egypt. Inconſiderable as that iſland may be thought, compared with the ſcenes we have witneſſed, let it be remembered, that it is an Iſland of which the government had long been recognized by every ſtate of Europe, againſt which France pretended no cauſe of war, and whoſe independance was as dear to itſelf and as ſacred as that of any country in Europe. It was in fact not unimportant from its local ſituation to the other powers of Europe, but in proportion as any man may diminiſh its importance, the inſtance will only ſerve the more to illuſtrate and confirm the propoſition which I have maintained.—The all-ſearching eye of the French Revolution looks to every part of Europe, and every quarter of the World, in which can be found an object either of acquiſition or plunder. Nothing is too great for the temerity of its ambition, nothing too ſmall or inſignificant for the graſp of its rapacity. From hence Bonaparte and his Army proceeded to Egypt. The attack was made, pretences were held out to the Natives of that Country in the name of the French King, whom they had mur-

dered;

dered; they pretended to have the approbation of the Grand Seignior, whoſe Territories they were violating; their project was carried on under the profeſſion of a zeal for Mahometaniſm; it was carried on by proclaming that France had been reconciled to the Muſſulman Faith, had abjured that of Chriſtianity, or as he in his impious language termed it, of *the Sect of the Meſſiah.*

The only plea which they have ſince held out to colour this atrocious Invaſion of a neutral and friendly territory, is that it was the road to attack the Engliſh power in India. It is moſt unqueſtionably true, that this was one and a principal cauſe of this unparalleled outrage; but another, and an equally ſubſtantial cauſe, (as appears by their own ſtatements,) was the diviſion and partition of the territories of what they thought a falling Power. It is impoſſible to diſmiſs this ſubject without obſerving that this attack againſt Egypt was accompanied by an attack upon the Britiſh Poſſeſſions in India, made on true revolutionary principles. In Europe, the propagation of the principles of France

France had uniformly prepared the way for the progreſs of its arms. To India, the lovers of Peace had ſent the Meſſengers of Jacobiniſm, for the purpoſe of inculcating War in thoſe diſtant regions, on Jacobin principles, and of forming Jacobin Clubs, which they actually ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing, and which in moſt reſpects reſembled the European model, but which were diſtinguiſhed by this peculiarity, that they were required to ſwear in one breath, *hatred to Tyranny, the love of Liberty, and the deſtruction of all Kings and Sovereigns, except the good and faithful Ally of the French Republic,* CITIZEN TIPPOO.

What then was the nature of this ſyſtem? Was it any thing but what I have ſtated it to be? an inſatiable love of aggrandizement, an implacable ſpirit of deſtruction againſt all the civil and religious inſtitutions of every country. This is the firſt moving and acting ſpirit of the French Revolution; this is the ſpirit which animated it at its birth, and this is the ſpirit which will not deſert it till the moment of its diſſolution,

tion, "which grew with its growth, which ſtrengthened with its ſtrength," but which has not abated under its misfortunes, nor declined in its decay; it has been invariably the ſame in every period, operating more or leſs, according as accident or circumſtances might aſſiſt it; but it has been inherent in the Revolution in all its ſtages, it has equally belonged to Briſſot, to Robeſpierre, to Tallien, to Reubel, to Barras, and to every one of the Leaders of the Directory, but to none more than to Bonapate, in whom now all their powers are united. What are its characters? Can it be accident that produced them? No, it is only from the alliance of the moſt horrid principles, with the moſt horrid means, that ſuch miſeries could have been brought upon Europe. It is this paradox which we muſt always keep in mind when we are diſcuſſing any queſtion relative to the effects of the French Revolution. Groaning under every degree of miſery, the victim of its own crimes, and as I once before expreſſed it in this Houſe, aſking pardon of God and of Man for the miſeries which it has brought upon itſelf and others,

France

France ſtill retains, (while it has neither left means of comfort, nor almoſt of ſubſiſtence to its own inhabitants,) new and unexampled means of annoyance and deſtruction againſt all the other Powers of Europe.

Its firſt fundamental principle was to bribe the poor againſt the rich, by propoſing to transfer into new hands, on the deluſive notion of Equality, and in breach of every principle of juſtice, the whole property of the Country; the practical application of this principle was to devote the whole of that Property to indiſcriminate plunder, and to make it the foundation of a Revolutionary ſyſtem of Finance, productive in proportion to the miſery and deſolation which it created. It has been accompanied by an unwearied ſpirit of Proſelytiſm, diffuſing itſelf over all the Nations of the Earth; a ſpirit which can apply itſelf to all circumſtances and all ſituations, which can furniſh a liſt of grievances, and hold out a promiſe of redreſs equally to all nations, which inſpired the teachers of French Liberty with the hope of alike recom-

 mending

mending themſelves to thoſe who live under the feudal code of the German Empire; to the various States of Italy, under all their different inſtitutions; to the old Republicans of Holland, and to the new Republicans of America; to the Catholic of Ireland, whom it was to deliver from Proteſtant uſurpation; to the Proteſtant of Switzerland, whom it was to deliver from Popiſh ſuperſtition; and to the Muſſulman of Egypt, whom it was to deliver from Chriſtian perſecution; to the remote Indian, blindly bigotted to his ancient inſtitutions; and to the Natives of Great Britain, enjoying the perfection of practical freedom, and juſtly attached to their conſtitution, from the joint reſult of habit, of reaſon, and of experience. The laſt and diſtinguiſhing feature is a perfidy which nothing can bind, which no tie of Treaty, no ſenſe of the principles generally received among Nations, no obligation, human or divine, can reſtrain. Thus qualified, thus armed for deſtruction, the genius of the French Revolution marched forth, the terror and diſmay of the World. Every Nation has in its turn been the witneſs, many have been

the victims of its principles, and it is left for us to decide, whether we will compromiſe with ſuch a danger, while we have yet reſources to ſupply the ſinews of War, while the heart and ſpirit of the Country is yet unbroken, and while we have the means of calling forth and ſupporting a powerful co-operation in Europe.

Much more might be ſaid on this part of the ſubject; but if what I have ſaid already is a faithful, though only an imperfect ſketch of thoſe exceſſes and outrages, which even Hiſtory itſelf will hereafter be unable fully to repreſent and record, and a juſt repreſentation of the principle and ſource from which they originated; will any man ſay that we ought to accept a precarious ſecurity againſt ſo tremendous a danger? much more will he pretend, after the experience of all that has paſſed, in the different ſtages of the French Revolution, that we ought to be deterred from probing this great queſtion to the bottom, and from examining, without ceremony or diſguiſe, whether the change which has recently taken place in France is ſufficient now to give ſecurity, not

againſt a common danger, but againſt ſuch a danger as that which I have deſcribed.

In examining this part of the ſubject, let it be remembered, that there is one other characteriſtic of the French Revolution, as ſtriking as its dreadful and deſtructive principles, I mean the inſtability of its government, which has been of itſelf ſufficient to deſtroy all reliance, if any ſuch reliance could, at any time, have been placed on the good faith of any of its rulers. Such has been the incredible rapidity with which the revolutions in France have ſucceeded each other, that I believe the names of thoſe who have ſucceſſively exerciſed abſolute power, under the pretence of Liberty, are to be numbered by the years of the revolution, and each of the new conſtitutions, which under the ſame pretence, has, in its turn, been impoſed by force on France, all of which alike were founded upon principles which profeſſed to be univerſal, and was intended to be eſtabliſhed and perpetuated among all the nations of the earth.—Each of theſe will be found,

found, upon an average, to have had about two years, as the period of its duration.

Under this revolutionary ſyſtem, accompanied with this perpetual fluctuation and change, both in the form of the government and in the perſons of the rulers, what is the ſecurity which has hitherto exiſted, and what new ſecurity is now offered? Before an anſwer is given to this queſtion, let me ſum up the hiſtory of all the revolutionary governments of France, and of their characters in relation to other powers, in words more emphatical than any which I could uſe—the memorable words pronounced, on the eve of this laſt conſtitution, by the orator * who was ſelected to report to an aſſembly, ſurrounded by a file of grenadiers, the new form of liberty which it was deſtined to enjoy under the auſpices of General Bonaparte. From this reporter, the mouth and organ of the

* Vide Speech of Boulay de la Meurthe, in the Council of Five Hundred, at St. Cloud, 19th Brumaire, (9th Nov.) 1799.

new

new government, we learn this important leſſon: " *It is eaſy to conceive, why peace* " *was not concluded before the eſtabliſhment* " *of the conſtitutional government. The only* " *government which then exiſted, deſcribed itſelf* " *as revolutionary; it was in fact only the ty-* " *ranny of a few men who were ſoon overthrown* " *by others, and it conſequently preſented no ſta-* " *bility of principles or of views, no ſecurity* " *either with reſpect to men or with reſpect to* " *things.*

" *It ſhould ſeem that that ſtability and that* " *ſecurity ought to have exiſted from the eſta-* " *bliſhment, and as the effect, of the conſtitu-* " *tional ſyſtem; and yet they did not exiſt more,* " *perhaps even leſs, than they had done before.* " *In truth, we did make ſome partial treaties;* " *we ſigned a continental peace, and a gene-* " *ral congreſs was held to confirm it; but theſe* " *treaties, theſe diplomatic conferences, appear* " *to have been the ſource of a new war, more* " *inveterate and more bloody than before.*

Reſore

" *Before the* 18*th Fructidor (*4*th September)*
" *of the* 5*th year, the French government exhi-*
" *bited to foreign nations ſo uncertain an exiſt-*
" *ance, that they refuſed to treat with it. After*
" *this great event, the whole power was abſorbed*
" *in the Directory; the legiſlative body can hard-*
" *ly be ſaid to have exiſted; treaties of peace*
" *were broken, and war carried every where,*
" *without that body having any ſhare in thoſe*
" *meaſures. The ſame Directory, after having*
" *intimidated all Europe, and deſtroyed, at its*
" *pleaſure, ſeveral governments, neither knowing*
" *how to make peace or war, or how even to*
" *eſtabliſh itſelf, was overturned by a breath, on*
" *the* 13*th Prairial (*18*th June), to make room*
" *for other men, influenced perhaps by different*
" *views, or who might be governed by different*
" *principles.*

" *Judging, then, only from notorious facts,*
" *the French government muſt be conſidered, as*
" *exhibiting nothing fixed, neither in reſpect to*
" *men or to things.*" Here, then, is the picture, down to the period of the laſt revolution, of the

the ſtate of France, under all its ſucceſſive governments!

Having taken a view of what it was, let us now examine what it is. In the firſt place, we ſee, as has been truly ſtated, a change in the deſcription and form of the ſovereign authority; a ſupreme power is placed at the head of this nominal Republic, with a more open avowal of military deſpotiſm than at any former period; with a more open and undiſguiſed abandonment of the names and pretences under which that deſpotiſm long attempted to conceal itſelf. The different inſtitutions, republican in their form and appearance, which were before the inſtruments of that deſpotiſm, are now annihilated; they have given way to the abſolute power of one man, concentrating in himſelf all the authority of the ſtate, and differing from other monarchs only in this, that (as my Honourable Friend * truly ſtated it) he wields a ſword inſtead of a ſceptre. What then is the confidence

* Mr. Canning.

we

we are to derive either from the frame of the government, or from the character and paſt conduct of the perſon who is now the abſolute ruler of France?

Had we ſeen a man of whom we had no previous knowledge ſuddenly inveſted with the ſovereign authority of the country; inveſted with the power of taxation, with the power of the ſword, the power of war and peace, the unlimited power of commanding the reſources, of diſpoſing of the lives and fortunes of every man in France; if we had ſeen, at the ſame moment, all the inferior machinery of the revolution, which, under the variety of ſucceſſive ſhocks, had kept the ſyſtem in motion, ſtill remaining intire, all that, by requiſition and plunder, had given activity to the revolutionary ſyſtem of finance, and had furniſhed the means of creating an army, by converting every man, who was of age to bear arms, into a ſoldier, not for the defence of his own country but for the ſake of carrying the war into the country of the

enemy; if we had ſeen all the ſubordinate inſtruments of Jacobin power ſubſiſting in their full force, and retaining (to uſe the French phraſe) all their original organization; and had then obſerved this ſingle change in the conduct of their affairs, that there was now one man, with no rival to thwart his meaſures, no colleague to divide his powers, no council to controul his operations, no liberty of ſpeaking or writing, no expreſſion of public opinion to check or influence his conduct; under ſuch circumſtances, ſhould we be wrong to pauſe, or wait for the evidence of facts and experience, before we conſented to truſt our ſafety to the forbearance of a ſingle man, in ſuch a ſituation, and to relinquiſh thoſe means of defence which have hitherto carried us ſafe through all the ſtorms of the revolution? if we were to aſk what are the principles and character of this ſtranger, to whom Fortune has ſuddenly committed the concerns of a great and powerful nation?

But

But is this the actual ſtate of the preſent queſtion? Are we talking of a ſtranger of whom we have heard nothing? No, Sir: we have heard of him; we, and Europe, and the world, have heard both of him and of the ſatelites by whom he is ſurrounded, and it is impoſſible to diſcuſs fairly the propriety of any anſwer which could be returned to his overtures of negociation, without taking into conſideration the inferences to be drawn from his perſonal character and conduct. I know it is the faſhion with ſome gentlemen to repreſent any reference to topics of this nature as invidious and irritating; but the truth is, that they ariſe unavoidably out of the very nature of the queſtion. Would it have been poſſible for Miniſters to diſcharge their duty, in offering their advice to their Sovereign, either for accepting or declining negociation, without taking into their account the reliance to be placed on the diſpoſition and the principles of the perſon, on whoſe diſpoſition and principles the ſecurity to be obtained by treaty muſt, in the preſent circumſtances, principally depend: or

would they act honeſtly or candidly towards Parliament and towards the Country, if, having been guided by theſe conſiderations, they forbore to ſtate publicly and diſtinctly, the real grounds which have influenced their deciſion; and if, from a falſe delicacy and groundleſs timidity, they purpoſely declined an examination of a point, the moſt eſſential towards enabling Parliament to form a juſt determination on ſo important a ſubject?

What opinion, then, are we led to form of the pretenſions of the Conſul to thoſe particular qualities for which, in the Official Note, his perſonal character is repreſented to us as the ſureſt pledge of peace? we are told this is his ſecond attempt at general pacification. Let us ſee, for a moment, how this attempt has been conducted. There is, indeed, as the Learned Gentleman has ſaid, a word in the firſt Declaration which refers to general peace, and which ſtates this to be the ſecond time in which the Conſul has endeavoured to accompliſh that object. We thought fit, for the

reaſons

reaſons which have been aſſigned, to decline altogether the propoſal of treating, under the preſent circumſtances, but we, at the ſame time, expreſſly ſtated, that, whenever the moment for treaty ſhould arrive, we would in no caſe treat, but in conjunction with our Allies. Our general refuſal to negociate at the preſent moment does not prevent the Conſul from renewing his overtures; but are they renewed for the purpoſe of general pacification? Though he had hinted at general peace in the terms of his firſt Note; though we had ſhewn, by out anſwer, that we deemed negociation, even for general peace, at this moment, inadmiſſible; though we added, that, even at any future period, we would treat only in conjunction with our Allies; what was the propoſal contained in his laſt Note?—to treat for a ſeparate peace between Great Britain and France.

Such was the ſecond attempt to effect *general pacification:* a propoſal for a *ſeparate* treaty with great Britain.—What had been the

firſt? the concluſion of a *ſeparate* treaty with Auſtria; and there are two anecdotes connected with the concluſion of this treaty, which are ſufficient to illuſtrate the diſpoſition of this pacification of Europe. This very treaty of Campo Formio was oſtentatiouſly profeſſed to be concluded with the Emperor for the purpoſe of enabling Bonaparte to take the command of the Army of England, and to dictate a ſeparate peace with this Country on the banks of the Thames. But there is this additional circumſtance, ſingular beyond all conception, conſidering that we are now referred to the treaty of Campo Formio as a proof of the perſonal diſpoſition of the Conſul to general peace; he ſent his two confidential and choſen friends, *Berthier* and *Monge*, charged to communicate to the Directory this treaty of Campo Formio; to announce to them, that one enemy was humbled, that the war with Auſtria was terminated, and, therefore, that now was the moment to proſecute their operations againſt this Country; they uſed, on this occaſion, the memorable words, " *the Kingdom*

" *of*

of Great Britain and the French Republic cannot exiſt together." This, I ſay, was the ſolemn declaration of the deputies and ambaſſadors of Bonaparte himſelf, offering to the Directory the firſt fruits of this firſt attempt at general pacification.

So much for his diſpoſition towards general pacification; let us look next at the part he has taken in the different ſtages of the French revolution, and let us then judge whether we are to look to him, as the ſecurity againſt revolutionary principles; let us determine what reliance we can place on his engagements with other countries, when we ſee how he has obſerved his engagements to his own. When the conſtitution of the third year was eſtabliſhed under Barras, that conſtitution was impoſed by the arms of Bonaparte, then commanding the Army of the Triumverate, in Paris. To that conſtitution he then ſwore fidelity. How often he has repeated the ſame oath I know not, but twice, at leaſt, we know that he has not only repeated

it

it himſelf, but tendered it to others, under circumſtances too ſtriking not to be ſtated.

Sir, the Houſe cannot have forgotten the revolution of the 4th of September, which produced the diſmiſſal of Lord Malmſbury from Liſle. How was that revolution procured? It was procured chiefly by the promiſe of Bonaparte (in the name of his army), decidedly to ſupport the Directory in thoſe meaſures which led to the infringement and violation of every thing that the authors of the conſtitution of 1795, or its adherents, could conſider as fundamental, and which eſtabliſhed a ſyſtem of deſpotiſm inferior only to that now realized in his own perſon. Immediately before this event, in the midſt of the deſolation and bloodſhed of Italy, he had received the ſacred preſent of new banners from the Directory; he delivered them to his army with this exhortation: "Let "us ſwear, fellow-ſoldiers, by the manes of the "patriots who have died by our ſide, eternal "hatred to the enemies of the conſtitution of the

"third

" third year." That very conſtitution which he ſoon after enabled the Directory to violate, and which, at the head of his grenadiers, he has now finally deſtroyed. Sir, that oath was again renewed, in the midſt of that very ſcene to which I have laſt referred; the oath of fidelity to the conſtitution of the third year was adminiſtered to all the members of the Aſſembly then ſitting (under the terror of the bayonet), as the ſolemn preparation for the buſineſs of the day; and the morning was uſhered in with ſwearing attachment to the conſtitution, that the evening might cloſe with its deſtruction.

If we carry our views out of France, and look at the dreadful catalogue of all the breaches of treaty, all the acts of perfidy at which I have only glanced, and which are preciſely commenſurate with the number of treaties which the republic have made; (for I have ſought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken) if we trace the hiſtory of them all

from the beginning of the revolution to the preſent time, or if we ſelect thoſe which have been accompanied by the moſt atrocious cruelty, and marked the moſt ſtrongly with the characteriſtic features of the revolution, the name of Bonaparte will be found allied to more of them than that of any other that can be handed down in the hiſtory of the crimes and miſeries of the laſt ten years. His name will be recorded with the horrors committed in Italy, in the memorable campaign of 1796 and 1797, in the Milaneſe, in Genoa, in Modena, in Tuſcany, in Rome, and in Venice.

His entrance into Lombardy was announced by a ſolemn proclamation, iſſued on the 27th of April, 1796, which terminated with theſe words: "*Nations of Italy! the French army is come to* "*break your chains, the French are the friends* "*of the people in every country, your religion,* "*your property, your cuſtoms, ſhall be reſpected.*" This was followed by a ſecond proclamation, dated

dated from Milan 20th of May and ſigned "*Bo-*
"*naparte*," in theſe terms: "*Reſpect for property*
"*and perſonal ſecurity. Reſpect for the religion*
"*of countries, theſe are the ſentiments of the go-*
"*vernment of the French republic, and of the army*
"*of Italy. The French victorious conſider the na-*
"*tions of Lombardy as their brothers.*" In teſti-
mony of this fraternity, and to fulfill the ſolemn
pledge of reſpecting property, this very proclama-
tion impoſed on the Milaneſe a proviſional con-
tribution to the amount of twenty millions of
livres, or near one million ſterling, and ſucceſſive
exactions were afterwards levied on that ſingle
ſtate to the amount, in the whole, of near ſix mil-
lions ſterling. The regard to religion and to the
cuſtoms of the country was manifeſted with the
ſame ſcrupulous fidelity. The churches were
given up to indiſcriminate plunder. Every reli-
gious and charitable fund, every public treaſure,
was confiſcated. The country was made the
ſcene of every ſpecies of diſorder and rapine.
The prieſts, the eſtabliſhed form of worſhip, all

the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted by the French troops; at *Pavia* particularly the tomb of *St. Augustin*, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced; this last provocation having roused the resentment of the people they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison and took them prisoners, but carefully abstained from offering any violence to a single soldier. In revenge for this conduct, *Bonaparte*, then on his march to the *Mincio*, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country; he burnt the town of *Benasco* and massacred eight hundred of its inhabitants; he marched to *Pavia*, took it by storm, and delivered it over to general plunder, and published, at the same moment, a proclamation, of the 26th of May, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms, and taken an oath of obedience, and to burn every village where the *tocsin* should

ſhould be ſounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.

The tranſactions with *Modena* were on a ſmaller ſcale, but in the ſame character. *Bonaparte* began by ſigning a treaty, by which the Duke of *Modena* was to pay twelve millions of livres, and neutrality was promiſed him in return; this was ſoon followed by the perſonal arreſt of the Duke and by a freſh extortion of two hundred thouſand ſequins; after this he was permitted, on the payment of a farther ſum, to ſign another treaty, called a *Convention de Sureté*, which of courſe was only the prelude to the repetition of ſimilar exactions.

Nearly at the ſame period, in violation of the rights of neutrality and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French republic and the Grand Duke of Tuſcany in the preceding year, and in breach of a poſitive promiſe given only a few days before, the French army

army forcibly took poſſeſſion of Leghorn, for the purpoſe of ſeizing the Britiſh property which was depoſited there and confiſcating it as prize; and ſhortly after, when Bonaparte agreed to evacuate Leghorn in return for the evacuation of the Iſland of Elbe, which was in the poſſeſſion of the Britiſh troops, he inſiſted upon a ſeparate article, by which, in addition to the plunder before obtained, by the infraction of the law of nations, it was ſtipulated, that the Grand Duke ſhould pay the expence, which the French had incurred by this invaſion of his territory.

In the proceedings towards *Genoa* e ſhall find not only a continuation of the ſame ſyſtem of extortion and plunder, (in violation of the ſolemn pledge contained in the proclamations already referred to,) but a ſtriking inſtance of the revolutionary means employed for the deſtruction of independent governments. A French miniſter was at that time reſident at Genoa, which was acknowledged by France to be in a ſtate of neu-

trality and friendſhip: in breach of this neutrality *Bonaparte* began, in the year 1796, with the demand of a loan; he afterwards, from the month of September, required and enforced the payment of a monthly ſubſidy, to the amount which he thought proper to ſtipulate; theſe exactions were accompanied by repeated aſſurances and proteſtations of friendſhip; they were followed, in May, 1797, by a conſpiracy againſt the government, fomented by the emiſſaries of the French embaſſy, and conducted by the partizans of France; encouraged, and afterwards protected by the French miniſter. The conſpirators failed in their firſt attempt; overpowered by the courage and voluntary exertions of the inhabitants; their force was diſperſed, and many of their number were arreſted. Bonaparte inſtantly conſidered the defeat of the conſpirators as an act of aggreſſion againſt the French republic; he diſpatched an Aid-de-camp with an order to the Senate of this independent ſtate; firſt, to releaſe all the French who were detained; ſecondly, to puniſh

thoſe who had arreſted them; thirdly, to declare that *they had had no ſhare in the inſurrection*; and fourthly, to diſarm the people. Several French priſoners were immediately releaſed, and a proclamation was preparing to diſarm the inhabitants, when, by a ſecond note, *Bonaparte* required the arreſt of the three Inquiſitors of State, and immediate alterations in the conſtitution; he accompanied this with an order to the French miniſter to quit Genoa, if his commands were not immediately carried into execution; at the ſame moment his troops entered the territory of the republic, and ſhortly after the councils, intimidated and overpowered, abdicated their functions. Three deputies were then ſent to Bonaparte to receive from him a new conſtitution; on the 6th of June, after the conferences at *Montebello*, he ſigned a convention, or rather iſſued a decree, by which he fixed the new form of their government; he himſelf named proviſionally all the members who were to compoſe it, and he required the payment of ſeven millions

of

of livres, as the price of the ſubverſion of their conſtitution, and their independence. Theſe tranſactions require but one ſhort comment; it is to be found in the official account given of them at *Paris*, which is in theſe memorable words: "*General Bonaparte* has purſued the only line "of conduct which could be allowed in the re- "preſentative of a nation, *which has ſupported* "*the war only to procure the ſolemn acknow-* "*ledgement of the right of nations, to change the* "*form of their government.* He contributed "*nothing* towards the revolution of *Genoa*, but "he ſeized the firſt moment to acknowledge the "new government, as ſoon as he ſaw that it was "*the reſult of the wiſhes of the people.*"*

It is unneceſſary to dwell on the wanton attacks againſt *Rome*, under the direction of *Bonaparte* himſelf in the year 1796, and in the begin-

* *Redacteur Officiel*, June 30, 1797.

ing of 1797, which terminated firſt, by the treaty of *Tolentino* concluded by Bonaparte, in which, by enormous ſacrifices, the Pope was allowed to purchaſe the acknowledgment of his authority, as a Sovereign Prince; and ſecondly, by the violation of that very treaty, and the ſubverſion of the Papal authority by *Joſeph Bonaparte*, the brother and the agent of the General, and the Miniſter of the French Republic to the Holy See. A tranſaction, accompanied by outrages and inſults towards the pious and venerable Pontiff (in ſpite of the ſanctity of his age and the unſullied purity of his character) which even to a Proteſtant, ſeem hardly ſhort of the guilt of ſacrilege.

But of all the diſguſting and tragical ſcenes which took place in Italy, in the courſe of the period I am deſcribing, thoſe which paſſed at *Venice* are perhaps the moſt ſtriking, and the moſt characteriſtic: In May, 1796, the French army, under Bonaparte, in the full tide of its ſucceſs

ſucceſs againſt the Auſtrians, firſt approached the territories of this republic, which from the commencement of the war had obſerved a rigid neutrality. Their entrance on theſe territories was as uſual accompanied by a ſolemn proclamation in the name of their general. "*Bonaparte, to the republic of Venice.*" "It is to deliver the "fineſt country in Europe *from the iron yoke of* "*the proud houſe of Auſtria*, that the French "army has braved obſtacles the moſt difficult to "ſurmount. Victory in union with Juſtice has "crowned its efforts. The wreck of the enemy's "army has retired behind the Mincio. The "French army, in order to follow them, paſſes "over the territory of the republic of Venice; "but it will never forget, *that ancient friend-* "*ſhip unites he two republics. Religion, go-* "*vernment, cuſtoms, and property, ſhall be* "*reſpected.* That the people may be without "apprehenſion, the moſt ſevere diſcipline ſhall "be maintained. All that may be provided for "the army ſhall be faithfully paid for in money.

" The general-in-chief engages the officers of " the republic of Venice, the magiſtrates, and " the prieſts, to make known theſe ſentiments " to the people, in order, that confidence may " cement that friendſhip which has ſo long united " the two nations, faithful in the path of honor, " as in that of victory. The French ſoldier is ter- " rible only to the enemies of his liberty and his " government." *Bonaparte.**

This proclamation was followed by exactions ſimilar to thoſe which were practiſed againſt Genoa, by the renewal of ſimilar profeſſions of friendſhip and the uſe of ſimilar means to excite inſurrection At length, in the ſpring of 1797, occaſion was taken from diſturbances thus excited, to forge, in the name of the Venetian Government, a proclamation,†

* Vide Debrett's State Papers. vol. 5. p. 28.

† Vide Account of this tranſaction in the Proclamation of the Senate of Venice, April 12, 1798.——Debrett's State Papers, vol. 6th, page 67.

hoſtile

hoſtile to France, and this proceeding was made the ground for military execution againſt the Country, and for effecting by force the ſubverſion of its ancient government and the eſtabliſhment of the democratic forms of the French Revolution. This revolution was ſealed by a treaty, ſigned in May, 1797, between *Bonaparte* and Commiſſioners appointed on the part of the new and revolutionary government of *Venice*. By the ſecond and third ſecret articles of this treaty, Venice agreed to give as a ranſom, to ſecure itſelf againſt all farther exactions or demands, the ſum of three millions of livres in money, the value of three millions more in articles of naval ſupply, and three ſhips of the line; and it received in return the aſſurances of the friendſhip and ſupport of the French Republic. Immediately after the ſignature of this treaty, the Arſenal, the Library, and the Palace of St. Marc were ranſacked and plundered, and heavy additional contributions were impoſed upon its inhabitants. And, in not more than four

four months afterwards, this very Republic of Venice, united by alliance to France, the creature of Bonaparte himſelf, from whom it had received the preſent of French liberty, was by the ſame Bonaparte transferred under the treaty of *Campo Formio* to "*that iron yoke of the proud Houſe of Auſtria*," to deliver it from which he had repreſented in his firſt proclamation to be the great object of all his operations.

Sir, all this is followed by the memorable expedition into Egypt, which I mention, not merely becauſe it forms a principal article in the catalogue of thoſe acts of violence and perfidy in which Bonaparte has been engaged; not merely becauſe it was an enterprize peculiarly his own, of which he was himſelf the planner, the executor, and the betrayer; but chiefly becauſe when from thence he retires to a different ſcene, to take poſſeſſion of a new throne, from which he is to ſpeak upon an equality with the Kings and Governors of Europe, he leaves behind

hind him, at the moment of his departure, a ſpecimen, which cannot be miſtaken, of his principles of negociation. The Intercepted Correſpondence, which has been alluded to in this debate, ſeems to afford the ſtrongeſt ground to believe, that his offers to the Turkiſh Government to evacuate Egypt, were made ſolely with a view to gain time; that the ratification of any treaty on this ſubject was to be delayed with the view of finally eluding its performance, if any change of circumſtances favourable to the French ſhould occur in the interval. But whatever Gentlemen may think of the intention with which theſe offers were made, there will at leaſt be no queſtion with reſpect to the credit due to thoſe profeſſions by which he endeavoured to prove, in Egypt, his pacific diſpoſitions. He expreſsly enjoins his ſucceſſor, ſtrongly and ſteadily to inſiſt in all his intercourſe with the Turks, that he came to Egypt with no hoſtile deſign, and that he never meant to keep poſſeſſion of the country; while, on the oppoſite page of the ſame inſtruc-

inſtructions, he ſtates in the moſt unequivocal manner, his regret at the diſcomfiture of his favourite project of colonizing Egypt, and of maintaining it as a territorial acquiſition. Now, Sir, if in any note addreſſed to the Grand Vizier, or the Sultan, Bonaparte had claimed credit for the ſincerity of his profeſſions, that he came to Egypt with no view hoſtile to Turkey and ſolely for the purpoſe of moleſting the Britiſh, intereſts, is there any one argument now uſed to induce us to believe his preſent profeſſions to us, which might not have been equally urged on that occaſion? would not that profeſſion have been equally ſupported by ſolemn aſſeveration, by the ſame reference which is now made to perſonal character, with this ſingle difference, that they would have then had one inſtance leſs of hypocricy and falſehood, which we have ſince had occaſion to trace in this very tranſaction.

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It is unneceſſary to ſay more with reſpect to the credit due to his profeſſions, or the reliance to be placed on his general character: But it will, perhaps be argued, that whatever may be his character, or whatever has been his paſt conduct, he has now an intereſt in making and obſerving peace. That he has an intereſt in making peace is at beſt but a doubtful propoſition, and that he has an intereſt in preſerving it is ſtill more uncertain. That it is his intereſt to negociate, I do not indeed deny; it is his intereſt above all to engage this country in ſeparate negociation, in order to looſen and diſſolve the whole ſyſtem of the confederacy on the Continent, to palſy, at once, the arms of Ruſſia or of Auſtria, or of any other country that might look to you for ſupport; and then either to break off his ſeparate treaty, or if he ſhould have concluded it, to apply the leſſon which is taught in

as ſchool of policy in Egypt; and to revive, at his pleaſure, thoſe claims of indemnification which *may have been reſerved to ſome happier period.**

This is preciſely the intereſt which he has in negociation; but on what grounds are we to be convinced that he has an intereſt in concluding and obſerving a ſolid and permanent pacification? Under all the circumſtances of his perſonal character, and his newly-acquired power, what other ſecurity has he for retaining that power, but the ſword? His hold upon France is the ſword, and he has no other. Is he connected with the ſoil, or with the habits, the affections, or the prejudices of the country? He is a Stranger, a Foreigner, and an Uſurper; he unites in his own perſon every thing that a pure Republican muſt deteſt; every thing that an enraged Jacobin

* Vide *Intercepted Correſpondence* from Egypt.

has

has abjured; every thing that a ſincere and faithful Royaliſt muſt feel as an inſult. If he is oppoſed at any time in his career, what is his appeal? *He appeals to his Fortune;* in other words, to his army and his ſword. Placing, then, his whole reliance upon military ſupport, can he afford to let his military renown paſs away, to let his laurels wither, to let the memory of his trophies ſink in obſcurity? Is it certain that, with his army confined within France, and reſtrained from inroads upon her neighbours, that he can maintain, at his devotion, a force ſufficiently numerous to ſupport his power? Having no object but the poſſeſſion of abſolute dominion, no paſſion but military glory, is it to be reckoned as certain, that he can feel ſuch an intereſt in permanent peace, as would juſtify us in laying down our arms, reducing our expence, and relinquiſhing our means of ſecurity, on the faith of his engagements? Do we believe, that after the concluſion of peace, he would not ſtill ſigh over the loſt tro-

phies of Egypt, wreſted from him by the celebrated victory of Aboukir, and the brilliant exertions of that heroic band of Britiſh ſeamen, whoſe influence and example rendered the Turkiſh troops invincible at *Acre*. Can he forget, that the effect of theſe exploits enabled Auſtria and Ruſſia, in one campaign, to recover from France, all which ſhe had acquired by his victories, to diſſolve the charm, which, for a time, faſcinated Europe, and to ſhew that their generals, contending in a juſt cauſe, could efface, even by their ſucceſs, and their military glory, the moſt dazzling triumphs of his victorious and deſolating ambition?

Can we believe, with theſe impreſſions on his mind, that, if after a year, eighteen months, or two years, of peace had elapſed, he ſhould be tempted by the appearance of freſh inſurrection in Ireland, encouraged by renewed and unreſtrained communication with France, and fo-

fomented,

mented by the freſh infuſion of Jacobin principles; if we were at ſuch a moment without a fleet to watch the ports of France, or to guard the coaſts of Ireland, without a diſpoſeable army, or an embodied militia, capable of ſupplying a ſpeedy and adequate reinforcement, and that he had ſuddenly the means of tranſporting thither a body of twenty or thirty thouſand French troops: can we believe, that at ſuch a moment his ambition and vindictive ſpirit would be reſtrained by the recollection of engagements, or the obligation of treaty? Or, if in ſome new criſis of difficulty and danger to the Ottoman Empire, with no Britiſh navy in the Mediterranean, no confederacy formed, no force collected to ſupport it, an opportunity ſhould preſent itſelf for reſuming the abandoned expedition to Egypt, for renewing the avowed and favourite project of conquering and colonizing that rich and fertile country, and of opening the way to wound ſome of the vital intereſts of England, and to plunder the treaſures of the Eaſt, in order to fill

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the bankrupt coffers of France? Would it be the intereſt of Bonaparte, under ſuch circumſtances, or his principles, his moderation, his love of peace, his averſion to conqueſt, and his regard for the independence of other nations;—would it be all, or any of theſe that would ſecure us againſt an attempt, which would leave us only the option of ſubmitting without a ſtruggle to certain loſs and diſgrace, or of renewing the conteſt which we had prematurely terminated, without allies, without preparation, with diminiſhed means, and with increaſed difficulty and hazard?

Hitherto I have ſpoken only of the reliance which we can place on the profeſſions, the character, and the conduct of the preſent Firſt Conſul; but it remains to conſider the ſtability of his power. The Revolution has been marked throughout by a rapid ſucceſſion of new depoſitaries of public authority, each ſupplanting his predeceſſor; what grounds have we to believe that

that this new Uſurpation, more odious and more undiſguiſed than all that preceded it, will be more durable? Is it that we rely on the particular proviſions contained in the code of the pretended conſtitution, which was proclaimed as accepted by the French people, as ſoon as the garriſon of Paris declared their determination to exterminate all its enemies, and before any of its articles could even be known to half the country, whoſe conſent was required for its eſtabliſhment?

I will not pretend to inquire deeply into the nature and effects of a Conſtitution, which can hardly be regarded but as a farce and a mockery. If, however, it could be ſuppoſed that its proviſions were to have any effect, it ſeems equally adapted to two purpoſes, that of giving to its founder for a time an abſolute and uncontrolled authority, and that of laying the certain foundation of diſunion and diſcord, which if they once prevail muſt render the exerciſe of all the authority under the conſti-

tution impoſſible, and leave no appeal but to the ſword.

Is then military deſpotiſm that which we are accuſtomed to conſider as a ſtable form of government? In all ages of the world, it has been attended with the leaſt ſtability to the perſons who exerciſed it, and with the moſt rapid ſucceſſion of changes and revolutions. In the outſet of the French revolution its advocates boaſted that it furniſhed a ſecurity for ever, not to France only but to all countries in the world, againſt military deſpotiſm; that the force of ſtanding armies was vain and deluſive; that no artificial power could reſiſt public opinion; and that it was upon the foundation of public opinion alone that any government could ſtand. I believe, that in this inſtance, as in every other, the progreſs of the French revolution has belied its profeſſions; but ſo far from its being a proof of the prevalence of public opinion againſt military force, it is inſtead of the proof, the ſtrongeſt exception from that doctrine

which

which appears in the hiſtory of the world. Through all the ſtages of the Revolution military force has governed; public opinion has ſcarcely been heard. But ſtill I conſider this as only an exception from a general truth; I ſtill believe, that, in every civilized country (not enſlaved by a Jacobin faction) public opinion is the only ſure ſupport of any government; I believe this with the more ſatisfaction, from a conviction that if this conteſt is happily terminated, the eſtabliſhed governments of Europe will ſtand upon that rock firmer than ever; and whatever may be the defects of any particular conſtitution, thoſe who live under it will prefer its continuance to the experiment of changes which may plunge them in the unfathomable abyſs of revolution, or extricate them from it, only to expoſe them to the terrors of military deſpotiſm. And to apply this to France, I ſee no reaſon to believe, that the preſent Uſurpation will be more permanent than any other military deſpotiſm, which has been eſtabliſhed by the ſame means, and with the ſame defiance of public opinion.

What, then, is the inference I draw from all that I have now ſtated? Is it, that we will in no caſe treat with Bonaparte? I ſay, no ſuch thing. But I ſay, as has been ſaid in the anſwer returned to the French Note, that we ought to wait for *experience, and the evidence of facts*, before we are convinced that ſuch a treaty is admiſſible. The circumſtances I have ſtated would well juſtify us if we ſhould be ſlow in being convinced; but on a queſtion of Peace and War, every thing depends upon degree, and upon compariſon. If, on the one hand, there ſhould be an appearance that the policy of France is at length guided by different maxims from thoſe which have hitherto prevailed; if we ſhould hereafter ſee ſigns of ſtability in the Government, which are not now to be traced; if the progreſs of the allied army ſhould not call forth ſuch a ſpirit in France, as to make it probable that the act of the Country itſelf will deſtroy the ſyſtem now prevailing; if the danger, the difficulty, the riſk of continuing the conteſt ſhould increaſe, while the hope of complete ultimate ſucceſs ſhould be diminiſhed;

miniſhed; all theſe, in their due place, are conſiderations, which, with myſelf and (I can anſwer for it) with every one of my colleagues, will have their juſt weight. But at preſent theſe conſiderations all operate one way; at preſent there is nothing from which we can preſage a favourable diſpoſition to change in the French Councils; There is the greateſt reaſon to rely on powerful co-operation from our Allies; there are the ſtrongeſt marks of a diſpoſition in the interior of France to active reſiſtance againſt this new Tyranny; and there is every ground to believe, on reviewing our ſituation, and that of the enemy, that if we are ultimately diſappointed of that complete ſucceſs which we are at preſent entitled to hope, the continuance of the conteſt, inſtead of making our ſituation comparatively worſe, will have made it comparatively better.

If then I am aſked how long are we to perſevere in the war, I can only ſay, that no period can be accurately aſſigned beforehand. Conſidering the importance of obtaining complete ſecurity for the objects for which we contend, we

ought not to be diſcouraged too ſoon: but on the other hand, conſidering the importance of not impairing and exhauſting the radical ſtrength of the Country, there are limits beyond which we ought not to perſiſt, and which we can determine only by eſtimating and comparing fairly, from time to time, the degree of ſecurity to be obtained by treaty, and the riſk and diſadvantage of continuing the conteſt.

But, Sir, there are ſome Gentlemen in the Houſe, who ſeem to conſider it already certain, that the ultimate ſucceſs to which I am looking is unattainable: they ſuppoſe us contending only for the reſtoration of the French Monarchy, which they believe to be impracticable, and deny to be deſirable for this Country. We have been aſked in the courſe of this debate, do you think you can impoſe monarchy upon France, againſt the will of the nation? I never thought it, I never hoped it, I never wiſhed it: I have thought, I have hoped, I have wiſhed, that the time might come when the effect of the arms of the Allies might ſo far overpower the mili-

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tary force which keeps France in bondage, as to give vent and ſcope to the thoughts and actions of its inhabitants. We have, indeed, already ſeen abundant proof of what is the diſpoſition of a large part of the country; we have ſeen almoſt through the whole of the Revolution the Weſtern Provinces of France deluged with the blood of its inhabitants, obſtinately contending for their ancient Laws and Religion. We have recently ſeen in the revival of that war, freſh proof of the zeal which ſtill animates thoſe countries, in the ſame cauſe. Theſe efforts (I ſtate it diſtinctly, and there are thoſe near me who can bear witneſs to the truth of the aſſertion) were not produced by any inſtigation from hence; they were the effects of a rooted ſentiment prevailing through all thoſe Provinces, forced into action by the *Law of the Hoſtages* and the other tyrannical meaſures of the Directory, at the moment when we were endeavouring to diſcourage ſo hazardous an enterpriſe. If, under ſuch circumſtances, we find them giving proofs of their unalterable perſeverance in their principles; if there is every reaſon to believe that the ſame diſpoſi-

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tion prevails in many other extenſive provinces of France; if every party appears at length equally wearied and diſappointed with all the ſucceſſive changes which the Revolution has produced; if the queſtion is no longer between Monarchy, and even the pretence and name of Liberty, but between the ancient line of Hereditary Princes on the one hand, and a military tyrant, a foreign uſurper, on the other; if the armies of that uſurper are likely to find ſufficient occupation on the frontiers, and to be forced at length to leave the interior of the Country at liberty to manifeſt its real feeling and diſpoſition; what reaſon have we to anticipate, that the Reſtoration of Monarchy under ſuch circumſtances is impracticable?

The Learned Gentleman has, indeed, told us, that almoſt every man now poſſeſſed of property in France, muſt neceſſarily be intereſted in reſiſting ſuch a change, and that therefore it never can be effected. If that ſingle conſideration were concluſive againſt the poſſibility of a change, for the ſame reaſon the Revolution itſelf,

by which the whole property of the Country was taken from its ancient poſſeſſors, could never have taken place. But though I deny it to be an inſuperable obſtacle, I admit it to be a point of conſiderable delicacy and difficulty. It is not indeed for us to diſcuſs minutely, what arrangement might be formed on this point to conciliate and unite oppoſite intereſts; but whoever conſiders the precarious tenure and depreciated value of lands held under the revolutionary title, and the low price for which they have generally been obtained, will think it perhaps not impoſſible that an ample compenſation might be made to the bulk of the preſent poſſeſſors, both for the purchaſe-money they have paid, and for the actual value of what they now enjoy; and that the ancient proprietors might be reinſtated in the poſſeſſion of their former rights, with only ſuch a temporary ſacrifice as reaſonable men would willingly make to obtain ſo eſſential an object.

The Honourable and Learned Gentleman, however, has ſupported his reaſoning on this part of

of the ſubject, by an argument which he undoubtedly conſiders as unanſwerable—a reference to what would be his own conduct in ſimilar circumſtances; and he tells us that every landed Proprietor in France muſt ſupport the preſent order of things in that country from the ſame motive that he and every Proprietor of Three per Cent. Stock would join in the defence of the Conſtitution of Great Britain. I muſt do the Learned Gentleman the juſtice to believe that the habits of his profeſſion muſt ſupply him with better and nobler motives, for defending a Conſtitution which he has had ſo much occaſion to ſtudy and examine, than any which he can derive from the value of his proportion (however large) of Three per Cents, even ſuppoſing them to continue to increaſe in price as rapidly as they have done, during the laſt three years, in which the ſecurity and proſperity of the Country has been eſtabliſhed by following a ſyſtem directly oppoſite to the counſels of the Learned Gentleman and his friends.

The Learned Gentleman's illuſtration however, though it fails with reſpect to himſelf, is happily

happily and aptly applied to the ſtate of France; and let us ſee what inference it furniſhes with reſpect to the probable attachment of monied men to the continuance of the revolutionary ſyſtem, as well as with reſpect to the general ſtate of public credit in that Country. I do not indeed know that there exiſts preciſely any Fund of Three per Cents in France, to furniſh a teſt for the patriotiſm and public ſpirit of the lovers of French Liberty. But there is another Fund which may equally anſwer our purpoſe — the capital of Three per Cent Stock which formerly exiſted in France has undergone a whimſical operation, ſimilar to many other expedients of Finance which we have ſeen in the courſe of the Revolution—this was performed by a decree, which, as they termed it, *republicaniſed* their debt; that is, in other words, ſtruck off, at once, two-thirds of the capital, and left the Proprietors to take their chance for the payment of intereſt on the remainder. This remnant was afterwards converted into the preſent Five per Cent Stock. I had the curioſity very lately to enquire what price it bore in the market, and I was told that

the price had ſomewhat riſen from confidence in the new Government, and was actually as high as *ſeventeen*. I really at firſt ſuppoſed that my informer meant ſeventeen years purchaſe for every pound of intereſt, and I began to be almoſt jealous of revolutionary credit; but I ſoon found that he literally meant ſeventeen pounds for every hundred pounds capital ſtock of Five per Cent. that is, a little more than three and a half years purchaſe. So much for the value of revolutionary property, and for the attachment with which it muſt inſpire its poſſeſſors towards the ſyſtem of Government to which that value is to be aſcribed!

On the queſtion, Sir, how far the Reſtoration of the French Monarchy, if practicable, is deſirable, I ſhall not think it neceſſary to ſay much. Can it be ſuppoſed to be indifferent to us or to the world, whether the Throne of France is to be filled by a Prince of the Houſe of Bourbon, or by him whoſe principles and conduct I have endeavoured to develope? Is it nothing with a view to influence and example, whether the

fortune

fortune of this laſt adventurer in the Lottery of Revolutions, ſhall appear to be permanent? Is it nothing, whether a ſyſtem ſhall be ſanctioned which confirms by one of its fundamental articles, that general transfer of property from its ancient and lawful poſſeſſors, which holds out one of the moſt terrible examples of national injuſtice, and which has furniſhed the great ſource of revolutionary finance and revolutionary ſtrength againſt all the Powers of Europe?

In the exhauſted and impoveriſhed ſtate of France, it ſeems for a time impoſſible that any ſyſtem but that of robbery and confiſcation, any thing but the continued torture, which can be applied only by the engines of the Revolution, can extort from its ruined inhabitants more than the means of ſupporting, in peace, the yearly expenditure of its Government. Suppoſe, then, the Heir of the Houſe of Bourbon reinſtated on the Throne, he will have ſufficient occupation in endeavouring, if poſſible, to heal the wounds, and gradually to repair the loſſes of ten years of civil convulſion; to reanimate the drooping

 commerce,

commerce, to rekindle the induſtry, to replace the capital, and to revive the manufactures of the Country. Under ſuch circumſtances, there muſt probably be a conſiderable interval before ſuch a Monarch, whatever may be his views, can poſſeſs the power which can make him formidable to Europe; but while the ſyſtem of the Revolution continues, the caſe is quite different. It is true, indeed, that even the gigantic and unnatural means by which that Revolution has been ſupported, are ſo far impaired; the influence of its principles, and the terror of its arms, ſo far weakened; and its power of action ſo much contracted and circumſcribed; that againſt the embodied force of Europe, proſecuting a vigorous war, we may juſtly hope that the remnant and wreck of this ſyſtem cannot long oppoſe an effectual reſiſtance.

But, ſuppoſing the confederacy of Europe prematurely diſſolved; ſuppoſing our armies diſbanded, our fleets laid up in our harbours, our exertions relaxed, and our means of precaution and defence relinquiſhed; do we believe that the

revolutionary power, with this reſt and breathing-time given it to recover from the preſſure under which it is now ſinking, poſſeſſing ſtill the means of calling ſuddenly and violently into action whatever is the remaining phyſical force of France, under the guidance of military deſpotiſm; do we believe that this revolutionary power, the terror of which is now beginning to vaniſh, will not again prove formidable to Europe? Can we forget, that in the ten years in which that power has ſubſiſted, it has brought more miſery on ſurrounding nations, and produced more acts of aggreſſion, cruelty, perfidy, and enormous ambition, than can be traced in the Hiſtory of France for the centuries which have elapſed ſince the foundation of its monarchy, including all the wars which in the courſe of that period have been waged by any of thoſe Sovereigns, whoſe projects of aggrandizement, and violations of treaty, afford a conſtant theme of general reproach againſt the ancient government of France? And if not, can we heſitate whether we have the beſt proſpect of permanent peace, the beſt ſecurity for the independence and

ſafety

ſafety of Europe from the reſtoration of the lawful Government, or from the continuance of revolutionary power in the hands of *Bonaparte?*

In compromiſe and treaty with ſuch a power, placed in ſuch hands as now exerciſe it, and retaining the ſame means of annoyance which it now poſſeſſes, I ſee little hope of permanent ſecurity. I ſee no poſſibility at this moment of ſuch a peace as would juſtify that liberal intercourſe which is the eſſence of real amity; no chance of terminating the expenſes or the anxieties of war, or of reſtoring to us any of the advantages of eſtabliſhed tranquillity; and as a ſincere lover of peace, I cannot be content with its nominal attainment; I muſt be deſirous of purſuing that ſyſtem which promiſes to attain, in the end, the permanent enjoyment of its ſolid and ſubſtantial bleſſings for this Country and for Europe. As a ſincere lover of peace, I will not ſacrifice it by graſping at the ſhadow, when the reality is not ſubſtantially within my reach.—

Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida eſt, quia periculoſa, quia eſſe non poteſt.

If,

If, Sir, in all that I have now offered to the Houſe, I have ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing the propoſition, that the ſyſtem of the French Revolution has been ſuch as to afford to Foreign Powers no adequate ground for ſecurity in negotiation, and that the change which has recently taken place has not yet afforded that ſecurity; if I have laid before you a juſt ſtatement of the nature and extent of the danger with which we have been threatened; It would remain only ſhortly to conſider, whether there is any thing in the circumſtances of the preſent moment to induce us to accept a ſecurity confeſſedly inadequate againſt a danger of ſuch a deſcription.

It will be neceſſary here to ſay a few words on the ſubject on which Gentlemen have been ſo fond of dwelling, I mean our former Negotiations, and particularly that at Liſle in 1797. I am deſirous of ſtating frankly and openly the true motives which induced me to concur in then recommending negotiation; and I will leave it to the Houſe, and to the Country, to judge whether our conduct at that time was inconſiſtent

conſiſtent with the principles by which we are guided at preſent. That revolutionary policy which I have endeavoured to deſcribe, that gigantic ſyſtem of prodigality and bloodſhed by which the efforts of France were ſupported, and which counts for nothing the lives and the property of a nation, had at that period driven us to exertions which had, in a great meaſure, exhauſted the ordinary means of defraying our immenſe expenditure, and had led many of thoſe who were the moſt convinced of the original juſtice and neceſſity of the war, and of the danger of Jacobin principles, to doubt the poſſibility of perſiſting in it, till complete and adequate ſecurity could be obtained. There ſeemed, too, much reaſon to believe, that without ſome new meaſure to check the rapid accumulation of debt, we could no longer truſt to the ſtability of that funding ſyſtem, by which the Nation had been enabled to ſupport the expenſe of all the different wars in which we have engaged in the courſe of the preſent century. In order to continue our exertions with vigour, it became neceſſary that a new and ſolid ſyſtem of finance

ſhould

ſhould be eſtabliſhed, ſuch as could not be rendered effectual but by the general and decided concurrence of public opinion. Such a concurrence in the ſtrong and vigorous meaſures neceſſary for the purpoſe could not then be expected, but from ſatisfying the Country, by the ſtrongeſt and moſt decided proofs, that peace on terms in any degree admiſſible was unattainable.

Under this impreſſion we thought it our duty to attempt negotiation, not from the ſanguine hope, even at that time, that its reſult could afford us complete ſecurity, but from the perſuaſion, that the danger ariſing from peace under ſuch circumſtances was leſs than that of continuing the war with precarious and inadequate means. The reſult of thoſe negotiations proved, that the enemy would be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the ſacrifice of the honour and independence of the Country. From this conviction, a ſpirit and enthuſiaſm was excited in the Nation, which produced the efforts to which we are indebted for the ſubſequent change in our ſituation. Having witneſſed that happy change,

having obſerved the increaſing proſperity and ſecurity of the Country from that period, ſeeing how much more ſatisfactory our proſpects now are, than any which we could then have derived from the ſucceſsful reſult of negotiation, I have not ſcrupled to declare, that I conſider the rupture of the negotiation, on the part of the enemy, as a fortunate circumſtance for the country. But becauſe theſe are my ſentiments at this time, after reviewing what has ſince paſſed, does it follow that we were, at that time, inſincere in endeavouring to obtain peace? The Learned Gentleman, indeed, aſſumes that we were, and he even makes a conceſſion, of which I deſire not to claim the benefit: he is willing to admit, that on our principles, and our view of the ſubject, inſincerity would have been juſtifiable. I know, Sir, no plea that would juſtify thoſe who are entruſted with the conduct of public affairs, in holding out to Parliament and to the Nation one object, while they were, in fact, purſuing another. I did, in fact, believe, at the moment, the concluſion of peace (if it could have been obtained) to be preferable to the

the continuance of the war under its increaſing riſks and difficulties. I therefore wiſhed for peace, I ſincerely laboured for peace. Our endeavours were fruſtrated by the act of the enemy. If, then, the circumſtances are ſince changed, if what paſſed at that period has afforded a proof that the object we aimed at was unattainable, and if all that has paſſed ſince has proved, that, if peace had been then made, it could not have been durable, are we bound to repeat the ſame experiment, when every reaſon againſt it is ſtrengthened by ſubſequent experience, and when the inducements which led to it at that time have ceaſed to exiſt?

When we conſider the reſources and the ſpirit of the Country, can any man doubt that if adequate ſecurity is not now to be obtained by treaty, we have the means of proſecuting the conteſt without material difficulty or danger, and with a reaſonable proſpect of completely attaining our object? I will not dwell on the improved ſtate of public credit, on the continually increaſing amount (in ſpite of extraordinary temporary bur-

dens) of our permanent revenue, on the yearly acceſſion of wealth to an extent unprecedented even in the moſt flouriſhing times of peace, which we are deriving, in the midſt of war, from our extended and flouriſhing commerce; on the progreſſive improvement and growth of our manufactures; on the proofs which we ſee on all ſides of the uninterrupted accumulation of productive capital; and on the active exertion of every branch of national induſtry, which can tend to ſupport and augment the population, the riches, and the power of the Country.

As little need I recall the attention of the Houſe to the additional means of action which we have derived from the great augmentation of our diſpoſable military force, the continued triumphs of our powerful and victorious navy, and the events which, in the courſe of the laſt two years, have raiſed the military ardour and military glory of the Country to a height unexampled in any period of our hiſtory.

In addition to theſe grounds of reliance on our own ſtrength and exertions, we have ſeen

the conſummate ſkill and valour of the arms of our Allies proved by that ſeries of unexampled ſucceſs in the courſe of the laſt campaign, and we have every reaſon to expect a co-operation on the Continent, even to a greater extent, in the courſe of the preſent year. If we compare this view of our own ſituation with every thing we can obſerve of the ſtate and condition of our enemy; if we can trace him labouring under equal difficulty in finding men to recruit his army, or money to pay it; if we know that in the courſe of the laſt year the moſt rigorous efforts of military conſcription were ſcarcely ſufficient to replace to the French armies at the end of the campaign, the numbers which they had loſt in the courſe of it; if we have ſeen that that force, then in poſſeſſion of advantages which it has ſince loſt, was unable to contend with the efforts of the combined armies; if we know that even, while ſupported by the plunder of all the countries which they had overrun, thoſe armies were reduced, by the confeſſion of their commanders, to the extremity of diſtreſs, and deſtitute not only of the principal articles

of

of military ſupply, but almoſt of the neceſſaries of life; if we ſee them now driven back within their own frontiers, and confined within a country whoſe own reſources have long ſince been proclaimed by their ſucceſſive Governments to be unequal either to paying or maintaining them; if we obſerve, that ſince the laſt revolution, no one ſubſtantial or effectual meaſure has been adopted to remedy the intolerable diſorder of their finances, and to ſupply the deficiency of their credit and reſources; if we ſee through large and populous diſtricts of France, either open war levied againſt the preſent uſurpation, or evident marks of diſunion and diſtraction which the firſt occaſion may call forth into a flame; if, I ſay, Sir, this compariſon be juſt, I feel myſelf authorized to conclude from it, not that we are entitled to conſider ourſelves certain of ultimate ſucceſs, not that we are to ſuppoſe ourſelves exempted from the unforeſeen viciſſitudes of war; but that, conſidering the value of the object for which we are contending, the means for ſupporting the conteſt, and the probable courſe of human events, we ſhould be

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inexcuſable, if at this moment we were to relinquiſh the ſtruggle on any grounds ſhort of entire and complete ſecurity: that from perſeverance in our efforts under ſuch circumſtances, we have the faireſt reaſon to expect the full attainment of our object; but that at all events, even if we are diſappointed in our more ſanguine hopes, we are more likely to gain than to loſe by the continuation of the conteſt; that every month to which it is continued, even if it ſhould not in its effects lead to the final deſtruction of the Jacobin ſyſtem, muſt tend ſo far to weaken and exhauſt it, as to give us at leaſt a greater comparative ſecurity in any termination of the war: that, on all theſe grounds, this is not the moment at which it is conſiſtent with our intereſt or our duty to liſten to any propoſals of negotiation with the preſent Ruler of France; but that we are not therefore pledged to any unalterable determination as to our future conduct; that in this we muſt be regulated by the courſe of events; and that it will be the duty of His Majeſty's Miniſters from time to time to adapt their meaſures to any variation of circumſtances,

to

to conſider how far the effects of the military operations of the Allies or of the internal diſpoſition of France correſpond with our preſent expectations; and, on a view of the whole, to compare the difficulties or riſks which may ariſe in the proſecution of the conteſt, with the proſpect of ultimate ſucceſs, or of the degree of advantage to be derived from its further continuance, and to be governed by the reſult of all theſe conſiderations, in the opinion and advice which they may offer to their Sovereign.

THE END.

Printed by S. Gosnell,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.